

PRABUDDHA BHARATA *or* **AWAKENED INDIA**

**A monthly journal of the Ramakrishna Order
started by Swami Vivekananda in 1896**



April 2016

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THE ROAD TO WISDOM

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON *Uniqueness of Vedanta*

This Vedanta philosophy has certain peculiarities. In the first place, it is perfectly impersonal; it does not owe its origin to any person or prophet: it does not build itself around one man as a centre. Yet it has nothing to say against philosophies which do build themselves around certain persons. In later days in India, other philosophies and systems arose, built around certain persons—such as Buddhism, or many of our present sects. They each have a certain leader to whom they owe allegiance, just as the Christians and Mohammedans have. But the Vedanta philosophy stands at the background of all these various sects, and there is no fight and no antagonism between the Vedanta and any other system in the world. One principle the Vedanta claims to be found in every religion in the world – that man is divine, that all this which we see around us is the outcome of that consciousness of the divine. Everything that is strong, and good, and powerful in human nature is the outcome of that divinity, and though potential in many, there is no difference between man and man essentially, all being alike divine. There is, as it were, an infinite ocean behind, and you and I are so many waves, coming out of that infinite ocean; and each one of us is trying his best to manifest that infinite outside. So potentially each one of us has that infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss as our birthright, our real nature; and the difference between us



is caused by the greater or lesser power to manifest that divine. Therefore the Vedanta lays down that each man should be treated not as what he manifests, but as what he stands for. Each human being stands for the divine, and therefore, every teacher should be helpful, not by condemning man, but by helping him to call forth the divinity that is within him. It also teaches that all the vast mass of energy that we see displayed in society and in every plane of action is really from inside out; and therefore what is called inspiration by other sects, the Vedantist begs the liberty to call the expiration of man. At the same time it does not quarrel with other sects; the Vedanta has no quarrel with those who do not understand this divinity of man. Consciously or unconsciously, every man is trying to unfold that divinity. Man is like an infinite spring, coiled up in a small box, and that spring is trying to unfold itself; and all the social phenomena that we see are the result of this trying to unfold.

From *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*,
(Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2013), 1.398-99.

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Associate Editor and Design
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Production Editor
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Cover Design
Subhabrata Chandra

General Assistance
Swami Vimohananda
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Circulation
Indrajit Sinha
Tapas Jana

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Prabuddha Bharata
Advaita Ashrama
PO Mayavati, Via Lohaghat
Dt Champawat · 262 524
Uttarakhand, India
Tel: 91 · 96909 98179
prabuddhabharata@gmail.com
pb@advaitaashrama.org

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West Bengal, India
Tel: 91 · 33 · 2289 0898
2284 0210 / 2286 6450 / 6483
mail@advaitaashrama.org

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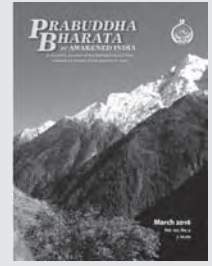
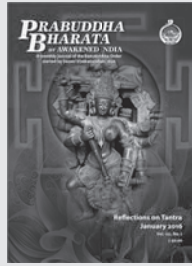
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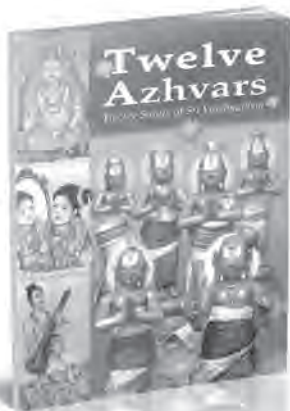
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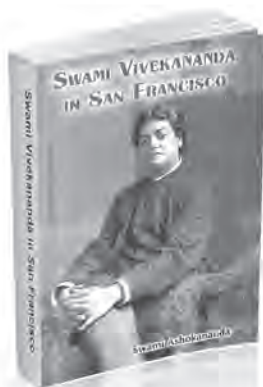


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Arise! Awake! And stop not till the goal is reached!

Maitrayaniya Upanishad

April 2016
Vol. 121, No. 4

मैत्रायणीयोपनिषत्

अथान्यत्राप्युक्तं शरीरमिदं मैथुनादेवोद्भूतं संवृद्धव्युपेतं निरयेऽथ मूत्रद्वारेण निष्क्रान्तमस्थिभिश्चितं
मांसेनानुलिप्तं चर्मणावनद्धं विण्मूत्रपित्तकफमज्जामेदोवसाभिरन्यैश्चामयैर्बहुभिः परिपूर्णं कोश इव
वसुना

॥३.४॥

*Athanyatrapy-uktam shariram idam maithunad-evodbhutam samvridhvyupetam niraye'tha
mutradvarena nishkrantam, asthibbish-chitam mamsenanuliptam charmanavanaddham vin-
mutra-pitta-kapha-majja-medo-vasabhir anyaisch-chamayair bahubhih paripurnam kosha iva
vasuna.*

(3.4)

‘And it has been said elsewhere also: “This body is born out of union of two bodies. It grows in the darkness of the womb. Then it comes out from the urinary passage. It is made up of bones, smeared with flesh, covered with skin, filled with faeces, urine, bile, phlegm, marrow, fat, grease, and also with many diseases, like a treasure full of wealth.”’

(3.4)

THIS MONTH

LIFE IS A SERIES OF interactions and responses. We respond to the environment, to the people around us, and also to our inner selves. Our responses are based on our world view. What would be the response of a spiritual person is analysed in **The Spiritual Response**.

Swami Vivekananda admired Lord Buddha and was impressed by his life and teachings. He talked about the Buddha in many of his lectures and was instrumental in the revival of Buddhism in India and abroad. Prof. (Dr) Subhas Chandra Saha, former vice chancellor of Assam University and Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh discusses this contribution of Swamiji in **Swami Vivekananda's Addresses on Buddha in America: A Fillip to the Revival of Buddhism in India**.

Immanuel Kant and Swami Vivekananda underlined some basic features of human life that are imperative for human self-respect. Their ideas could be synthesised to come to an understanding of human dignity as shown by Benulal Dhar, Associate Professor of philosophy at Sukanta Mahavidyalaya, Dhupguri, West Bengal, in **Kant and Vivekananda on Human Dignity: An Interface**.

The correspondence of the different syllables of Om with the different states of consciousness are shown in the third instalment of the edited transcription of a series of lectures on **Mandukya Upanishad** given by Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj, who was the thirteenth president of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission.

The importance of purity and detachment

are emphasised in the third instalment of Swami Omkareshwarananda's recounting of **Swami Premananda's Teachings**. This has been translated from the Bengali book *Premananda*.

Sri Ramakrishna learnt many tenets of scriptures from wandering monks. Hence, most of his utterances were paraphrases of scriptural texts. Some such instances are depicted in the second instalment of **Sri Ramakrishna: Scriptures Embodied** by Swami Kritarthananda, Ramakrishna Math, Belur Math.

Different aberrations in human beings are discussed in the second instalment of **The Psychological Aspects of Spiritual Life** by Swami Nityasthananda, acharya at the Probationers' Training Centre, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math.

In the twenty-first instalment of **Svarajya Siddhi of Gangadharendra Sarasvati—Attaining Self-dominion**, the Buddhist philosophy of *kshanikavada*, momentary consciousness, is quashed. This text has been translated and annotated by Swami Narasimhananda, editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*.

Bless Your Enemies reminds us that God takes care of sincere devotees. This story forms this month's *Traditional Tales* and has been translated from the Tamil book *Arulneri Kathaigal*.

Owen Gingerich, Professor of astronomy and Emeritus of the history of science at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics writes about science and religion in **God's Planet**. From this book, we bring you this month's *Manana*.

The Spiritual Response

We act based on what we believe to be true. The end of our life is usually what we cherish most. Our ideals evolve with our beliefs and convictions. For some money is everything. For some others it is knowledge. There are some who cherish love the most. Some want to possess all power. Our actions are also based on what we consider ourselves to be. If we consider ourselves to be weak, our efforts would be faint. If we consider ourselves to be strong, our endeavour would be resolute.

All of us live in a cocoon. What differs is only the size of the cocoon. There are small cocoons, big cocoons, and extremely large cocoons. Mind proves its materiality by being finite. Its finitude is evidenced by the limit of one's cocoon. The larger the cocoon of one's personality the closer one is to the infinite reality. However, it is only the bursting of the cocoon that would enable one to merge with the ultimate reality or Brahman.

The world we perceive is a mirror image of our cocoon. Narrow understandings and limited world views are signs of a crunched cocoon. Our beliefs weave the cocoon we live in. They determine what are material or immaterial to us. For the poor, basic needs could often become a luxury. For the rich, luxurious comforts are taken for granted. What one holds as essential to one's existence is what one is most afraid to lose. A child's bout at wrestling with adults is never seen as a challenge because the grown-ups are sure of their

supremacy. It is only when one is apprehensive of losing one's very basis of life that one becomes defensive or many a time, offensive. That is when people come out with their ugly fangs and try to sting their perceived enemies. Why perceived enemies? That is because most rela-

The world we perceive is a mirror image of our cocoon. Narrow understandings and a limited world view are signs of a crunched cocoon. Our beliefs weave the cocoon we live in.

tionships we make are just perceived and do not have much permanent reality to them. And thus, our friends and our foes are perceived. No friend or foe is greater than our own faith in ourselves.

All danger is also perceived. Ever walked cautiously so that no insect gets on your feet? No, at least, not in human habitations. One might do that in a forest with no defined pathways. Generally, we do not care about the numerous insects that surround us. Because, we do not perceive any threat. However, that may not be the case with the person we confront while on a walk. For all we know, that person could pose a larger threat to our lives and property than a miniscule member of our ecosystem. So, that is decided. Yes, most of our threats are perceived. That is why most people are more afraid of air travel than walking on a road with busy traffic. Though statistics tell us that travel by air is the safest mode of transport and that a large number of accidents happen every year on our roads,

most of us feel jittery in an aircraft. That is because of perception.


We consider our responses to our perceptions to be signs of evolution. We consider it imperative to protect ourselves from unfavourable external circumstances. To protect our body and mind, we create buildings, clothing, security, knowledge systems, and the list goes on. We go to great lengths to ensure that we do not lag in the race for the survival of the fittest. We constantly endeavour to improve this world of ours and to innovate to create better and better places to live in. We seek fulfilment and progress outside of us as an effort to attain inner peace and calm. Love is meaningful to us only as long as it produces things.

Naturally, how we respond to a problem depends largely or in most cases, solely, on how we perceive the problem. If a mentally disturbed person were to call us names, we would not bother and would probably pray for that person's welfare. On the other hand, if an otherwise healthy person were to verbally abuse us, we would not tolerate it and would come out with a fitting retort even before that person is finished. That would be our response because we perceive a threat in the verbal abuse. Deeper thought would make us see our faulty perception in this instance. How does someone calling us something bad change our nature? It does not. Apart from being disturbed by what you have heard, you do not change. And even that little disturbance would not occur if you choose not to be affected by those meaningless words.

Same is the case with anyone telling something bad about your body. Say, someone calls you a cripple. How would it change your body, if you are healthy? It would not. That shows us that we are disturbed because of our identification with external circumstances that really do not mean much. If we could train our mind to

stay rooted in the reality of our personality and not be swayed by what we experience, then we could achieve much more in life.

Till now the discussion has been primarily on the material level. What has been discussed is applicable to anyone irrespective of their religious or spiritual affiliation. What about the religious or spiritual person? Particularly one who considers oneself to be beyond the body and the mind and believes that one's true personality is a spiritual personality, the Atman. How would that person respond to external stimuli? Such a person's response would be that of indifference, not of the kind displayed by an ignorant, but the indifference of a wise mind. This indifference is based on the belief that one is beyond the body and the mind and is unaffected by the external circumstances. It is with this poise and aplomb that the wise person chooses not to react to any external stimuli, either of attraction or of repulsion, either of love or of hatred, either of good or of evil. With this equanimity, the wise person chooses to continue to focus on one's true nature that is beyond name and form and ignores wrong perceptions of experiences based on ignorance. There is no reaction, lamentation, or brooding over anything with this person. This makes this wise person wiser by the day and takes that person closer to self-realisation.

The spiritual response is a response that would take one closer to complete identification with and realisation of one's spiritual identity. That is a response with the choice of not to respond. Just like grown-ups do not care to respond to the loving punches of a toddler, the spiritual aspirant chooses not to respond to the vagaries of life that are brought upon oneself because of ignorant identification with the body and the mind. Such response is the spiritual response since it is anchored in the knowledge of Atman. 

Swami Vivekananda's Addresses on Buddha in America: A Fillip to the Revival of Buddhism in India

Prof. (Dr) Subhas Chandra Saha

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA WAS BORN in Calcutta at a time when the Buddha and Buddhism had been almost forgotten in the city, then capital of British India. He was born into a Kayastha family that had Shiva and Vishnu as its main deities. His parents received him as a blessing from Shiva as a result of his mother Bhuvaneswari Devi's prayers to Lord Vishvanath. His pet name was Bile, short for Viswanath. It was strange that Narendranath, his pre-monastic name, had a vision of the Buddha when meditating in his teens. He later told Swami Saradananda: 'I have seen many monks, but never have I seen such an extraordinary expression on any other face. That face has been indelibly printed on my heart. ... very often I think that I had the good fortune of seeing Lord Buddha that day.'¹

How did Swamiji recognise the Buddha when he had the vision in the early years of the last quarter of the nineteenth century? Pramatha Chaudhuri writes in his preface to the book *Buddha Dharma* by Satyendra Nath Thakur, first published in 1901:

'I take refuge in Buddha, I take refuge in Dhamma, I take refuge in Sangha'—in ancient India millions chanted these words while embracing Buddhism. But in time this great Indian religion vanished from India. About half-a-century ago, even one among a million Indians could not tell who Buddha was, what

his religion was, and what a Buddhist Sangha was, because even the memory of the *trisharanams* or the three refuges perished from this land where Buddhism originated.²

With no active preaching of Buddhism and no easy access to current or ancient scholarly works on Buddhism, it appears out of the ordinary that Swamiji had a spiritual vision of the Buddha. When his guru, Sri Ramakrishna was suffering from cancer at Kashipur, Narendranath organised his constant care and nursing by his young ascetic brother disciples, aged between sixteen and twenty-two. One day in April 1886, Narendranath along with a few brother disciples like Kali, later Swami Abhedananda, and Tarak, later Swami Shivananda, entered into an intense spiritual discussion about the Buddha. Narendranath became so ecstatic about Buddha that he decided to visit Bodh Gaya along with Kali and Tarak without informing anybody. They visited Bodh Gaya and meditated under the Bodhi tree. They spent three days and nights there and took bath in the Niranjana River. That Narendranath became obsessed with the Buddha was evident from many incidents that took place there.

Thereafter Narendranath became Swami Vivekananda and visited Chicago in 1893 to address the Parliament of Religions. On the penultimate day of the Parliament, Swamiji delivered a lecture exclusively on the Buddha. To

him, the Buddha and Buddhism were an integral part of Indian philosophy, religion, and culture. He chose a very significant title for the lecture: 'Buddhism, the Fulfilment of Hinduism'. And he began the lecture with great conviction: 'I am not a Buddhist, as you have heard and yet I am. If China, or Japan, or Ceylon follow the teachings of the Great Master, India worships him as God incarnate on earth.'³

Swamiji's observations in the lecture certainly contributed to Buddhism's revival and its spreading around the world. His assessment of the Buddha re-established the Buddha's eminence and message in the perspective of India's religious history: 'Again, I repeat, Shākya Muni came not to destroy, but he was the fulfilment, the logical conclusion, the logical development of the religion of the Hindus' (ibid.).

Swamiji rightly emphasised Buddha's humanitarian approach and extraordinary breadth of heart. He pointed out the Buddha's generosity to the poor and downtrodden and his special care for the suffering masses: 'The great glory of the Master lay in his wonderful sympathy for everybody, especially for the ignorant and the poor. ... Some of Buddha's Brahmin disciples wanted to translate his teachings into Sanskrit, but he distinctly told them, "I am for the poor, for the people; let me speak in the tongue of the people." And so to this day the great bulk of his teachings are in the vernacular of that day in India' (1.22).

Swamiji referred to Pali as the language of the Buddha's teachings. Swamiji was a sage extraordinary, combining the greatness of a scholar and an orator. That is why his utterances on the Buddha in the 1890s were so insightful, presenting the Buddha's greatness, though his sculptures and scriptures were buried in India. Swamiji unearthed the Buddha and his teachings and pioneered the revival of Buddhism in India and the West.

On 21 October 1894, Swamiji delivered

another lecture on Buddha at the Lyceum Theatre in Baltimore. The *Baltimore American* reported Swamiji having said, 'Buddha seems to have been the only prophet who did everything for others and absolutely nothing for himself. He gave up his home and all the enjoyments of life to spend his days in search of the medicine for the terrible disease of human misery' (2.496).

Swamiji stressed that the Buddha's religion was meant not only for those who adopted Buddhism but for the entire world. He thus highlighted the universality of the Buddha's teachings, which led to people in the West taking keen interest in the message of the Buddha. In February-March 1894, Swamiji delivered another lecture on the Buddha in Detroit. Swamiji was very precise and succinct in his assessment of the Buddha and Buddhism:

It [Buddhism] was founded by a great man called Gautama, who became disgusted at the eternal metaphysical discussions of his day, and cumbrous rituals, and more especially with the caste system. Some people say that we are born to a certain state, and therefore we are superior to others who are not thus born. He was also against the tremendous priestcraft. He preached a religion in which there was no motive power, and was perfectly agnostic about metaphysics or theories about God. He was often asked if there was a God, and he answered, he did not know. When asked about right conduct, he would reply, 'Do good and be good' (4.135).

Swamiji's addresses on the Buddha delivered in several cities of America not only presented the essence of the Buddha's teachings, but also because of the depth of his understanding and admiration of the Buddha, Swamiji's addresses became not only informative and educative but also extremely evocative and incantatory. Undoubtedly Swamiji's words on the Buddha revived and spread the two-thousand-five-hundred-year-old message of the Buddha most effectively among thousands of listeners in the West:

He [the Buddha] was the only man who was bereft of all motive power. There were other great men who all said they were the Incarnations of God Himself, and that those who would believe in them would go to heaven. But what did Buddha say with his dying breath? 'None can help you; help yourself; work out your own salvation.' He said about himself, 'Buddha is the name of infinite knowledge, infinite as the sky; I, Gautama, have reached that state; you will all reach that too if you struggle for it.' Bereft of all motive power, he did not want to go to heaven, did not want money; he gave up his throne and everything else and went about begging his bread through the streets of India, preaching for the good of men and animals with heart as wide as the ocean (4.136).

Swamiji's keen interest in and deep devotion to the Buddha and his teachings never waned. During his second visit to America during 1899–1900, he delivered his longest lecture on the Buddha in San Francisco on 18 March 1900. By then he was well-known internationally and his statements received attention throughout the world. By 1900 Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933) and Kripasaran Mahasthavir (1865–1926) had progressed considerably in their wholehearted endeavour to revive Buddhism, especially in and around Bengal.

In the beginning of his San Francisco speech on the Buddha, Swamiji proclaimed the overwhelming impact of Buddhism on the history of human civilisation: 'Buddhism is historically the most important religion ... because it was the most tremendous religious movement that the world ever saw, the most gigantic spiritual wave ever to burst upon human society. There is no civilisation on which its effect has not been felt in some way or other' (8.92).

Swamiji's impact on the world of ideas came mainly through his lectures. We may conclude that the revival of Buddhism in India is largely due to the revolutionary ideas Swamiji preached



Swami Vivekananda and Anagarika Dharmapala in Chicago

in the United States. He not only admired the Buddha and his teachings but also appreciated the missionary zeal of the Buddhists:

The followers of Buddha were most enthusiastic and very missionary in spirit. They were the first among the adherents of various religions not to remain content with the limited sphere of their Mother Church. They spread far and wide. They travelled east and west, north and south. They reached into darkest Tibet; they went into Persia, Asia Minor; they went into Russia, Poland, and many other countries of the Western world. They went into China, Korea, Japan, they went into Burma, Siam, the East Indies, and beyond. When Alexander the Great, through his military conquests, brought the Mediterranean world in contact with India, the wisdom of India at once found a channel

through which to spread over vast portions of Asia and Europe. Buddhist priests went out teaching among the different nations; and as they taught, superstition and priestcraft began to vanish like mist before the sun (*ibid.*).

Swamiji unambiguously assesses the Buddha's position in India: 'At the time Buddha was born, India was in need of a great spiritual leader, a prophet' (8.93). No portrait or assessment of the Buddha is more impressive and persuasive than that presented by Swamiji in the following address:

India was full of it [priestcraft] in Buddha's day. There were the masses of people, and they were debarred from all knowledge. If just a word of the Vedas entered the ears of a man, terrible punishment was visited upon him. The priests had made a secret of the Vedas—the Vedas that contained the spiritual truths discovered by the ancient Hindus!

At last one man could bear it no more. He had the brain, the power, and the heart—a heart as infinite as the broad sky. He felt how the masses were being led by the priests and how the priests were glorying in their power, and he wanted to do something about it. He did not want any power over any one, and he wanted to break the mental and spiritual bonds of men. His heart was large. The heart, many around us may have, and we also want to help others. But we do not have the brain; we do not know the ways and means by which help can be given. But this man had the brain to discover the means of breaking the bondages of souls. He learnt why men suffer, and he found the way out of suffering. He was a man of accomplishment, he worked everything out; he taught one and all without distinction and made them realise the peace of enlightenment. This was the man Buddha (8.96–7).

Swamiji brought alive the Buddha. He recaptured the greatness and uniqueness of the Buddha's contribution to the amelioration of humanity's suffering in the context of the social, political, economic, and spiritual situation in India that time:

Buddha cut through all these excrescences. He preached the most tremendous truths. ... one of his great messages was the equality of man. Men are all equal. No concession there to anybody! Buddha was the great preacher of equality. Every man and woman has the same right to attain spirituality—that was his teaching. The difference between the priests and other castes he abolished. Even the lowest were entitled to the highest attainments; he opened the door of Nirvāna to one and all. His teaching was bold even for India (97–8).

Swamiji considered Buddhism a universal religion and emphasised its universal aspects: 'Yet the religion of Buddha spread fast. It was because of the marvellous love which, for the first time in the history of humanity, overflowed a large heart and devoted itself to the service not only of all men but of all living things—a love which did not care for anything except to find a way of release from suffering for all beings' (8.99–100).

In 1900, at the turn of the century, Swamiji assessed the cause of the success of the Buddha's teachings that spread far and wide two thousand and five hundred years ago and highlighted their eternal appeal: 'It is a man that is to be loved. It was the first wave of intense love for all men—the first wave of true unadulterated wisdom—that, starting from India, inundated country after country, north, south, east, west' (8.100).

With his keen insight, Swamiji did not miss pointing out the boldness and novelty of the Buddha's teachings. Though forgotten in India for about six hundred years, the Buddha's teachings were revived through a clarion call by Swamiji:

This teacher wanted to make truth shine as truth. No softening, no compromise, no pandering to the priests, the powerful, the kings. No bowing before superstitious traditions, however hoary; no respect for forms and books just because they came down from the distant past. He rejected all scriptures, all forms of religious

practice. Even the very language, Sanskrit, in which religion had been traditionally taught in India, he rejected, so that his followers would not have any chance to imbibe the superstitions which were associated with it (8.100).

In his last address on the Buddha, Swamiji elaborated on all aspects of Buddhism, particularly the Buddha's legacy to mankind:

The life of Buddha has an especial appeal. All my life I have been very fond of Buddha. ... I have more veneration for that character than any other—that boldness, that fearlessness, and that tremendous love! He was born for the good of men. Others may seek God, others may seek truth for themselves; he did not even care to know truth for himself. He sought truth because people were in misery. How to help them, that was his only concern. Throughout his life, he never had a thought for himself. How can we ignorant, selfish, narrow-minded human beings ever understand the greatness of this man? (8.103–4).


Swamiji emphasised the spontaneous following that Buddha's teachings evoked year after year during his lifetime and after: 'Six hundred years before the birth of Christ, at the time when Buddha lived, the people of India must have had wonderful education. Extremely free-minded they must have been. Great masses followed him. Kings gave up their thrones; queens, gave up their thrones. People were able to appreciate and embrace his teachings, so revolutionary, so different from what they have been taught by the priests throughout the ages' (8.104).

Swamiji must have inspired Anagarika Dharmapala, a pioneer in the revival of Buddhism in India and abroad as is evident from Dharmapala's assessment of Swamiji's speeches in America. Dharmapala gave a lecture titled 'The World's Debt to Buddha' at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in September 1893 when he interacted with Swamiji after listening spellbound to his lectures. After returning to Calcutta, Dharmapala delivered

a lecture in the Minerva Theatre in appreciation and admiration of Swamiji's speeches in America.

We may conclude that Swamiji's speeches and writings continued to inspire people with patriotism and revolutionaries like Subhas Chandra Bose were motivated to sacrifice themselves for the freedom movement under the spell of these speeches and writings. Similarly, many Indians became worshippers of the Buddha after reading Swamiji's lectures on the Buddha. They exercised a profound influence on the minds of people for reviving the Buddha's teachings in India after an almost total blackout of about six centuries. The phenomenon of the revival of the Buddha's teachings and religion in India is mainly because of Swamiji's utterances.

Sister Nivedita under the influence of her guru, Swami Vivekananda, wrote at length on the Buddha. She observed: 'Chief of intellectual passions with the Swami, was his reverence for Buddha. ... Buddha was to him not only the greatest of the Aryans, but also "the one absolutely sane man" that the world had ever seen. ... "Buddha", he said, "was not a man, but a realisation"'⁴

Through Swamiji's speeches, numerous people have realised the greatness of the Buddha and the importance and magnificence of his teachings for the entire mankind. 

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Kant and Vivekananda on Human Dignity: An Interface

Benulal Dhar

THE EXPRESSION ‘HUMAN DIGNITY’ means the fundamental value or worth of an individual. Living with dignity for a human being denotes the moral standing of a person, which is different from the status of other living beings. For, only humans have personality, reason, and freedom of will. Firstly, a human personality consists in self-consciousness, self-determination, and self-identity. Secondly, the human being is a rational being and has the sense of good and evil. And finally, the human being has the freedom of will. These three characteristics of the human being are what give it the moral worth and have to be regarded and respected by oneself and others. This is called human dignity and has been dealt with by Immanuel Kant and Swami Vivekananda. The present paper proposes to analyse their viewpoints and attempts to find some points of convergence between their views on human dignity.

Kant on Human Dignity

For Kant, the mark of a human being, unique in the natural world order, is essentially reason and morality. That is, a human being occupies an elevated place in nature by virtue of these unique faculties of rationality and morality. Humans can claim to be autonomous and self-governing beings for possessing these invaluable and essential characteristics and because they are governed and ruled by laws that do not originate from outside them but are issued from their own

rational nature. These human laws enable them to enjoy freedom and determine the morality of their own conduct. This rationality is shared by all humans. This shared rationality and our equal capability of enjoying freedom and autonomy constitute, according to Kant, the basis of human dignity.

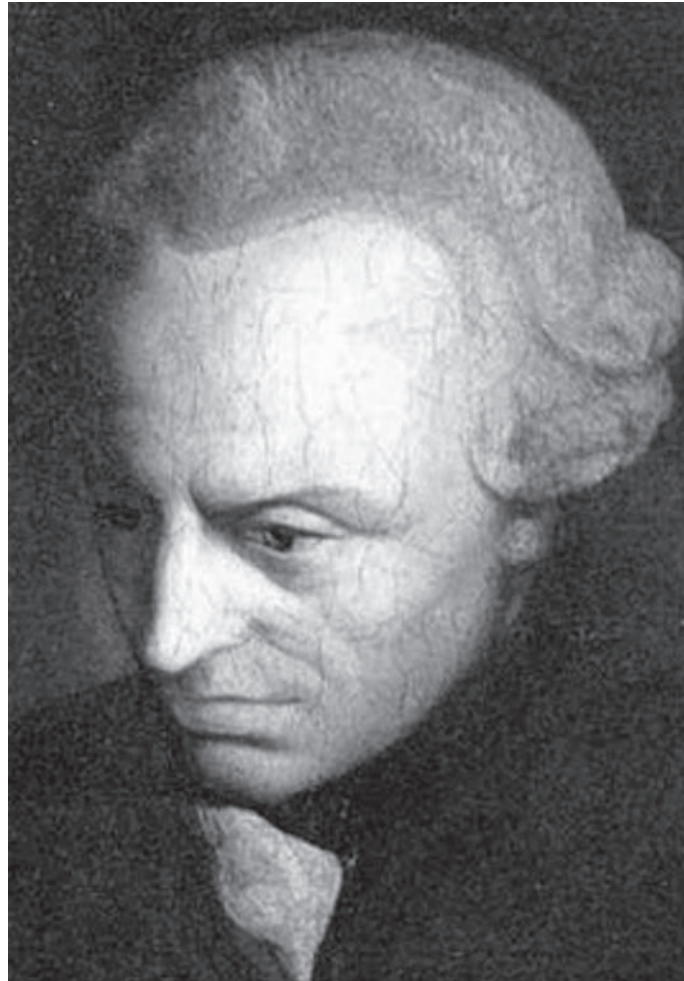
This is the framework within which Kant analyses his conception of human dignity. For Kant, we are capable of willing to do some action and this willing takes place under the influence of our kernel impulses, inclinations, or rational nature. Whenever we do something under the influence of impulses or inclinations, such actions cannot be called moral. On the contrary, whenever an action is motivated by our rational nature, then such an action attains the status of a moral action. An action, for Kant, has either a ‘subjective ground’ that depends on one’s impulses or inclinations, or on an ‘objective ground’ that depends on one’s rational nature. Whenever someone acts under the influence of impulses or inclinations, one acts according to, what Kant calls, a ‘maxim’—the latter being the subjective principle of action that is *not* a moral action. In order to be a moral action, a maxim or the subjective principle must be grounded on what Kant calls ‘the pure practical reason’, which would reduce it into an *objective* principle called ‘the categorical imperative’. Thus rational motive, rather than impulsive motive, provides the unconditioned and objective ground to the

moral law which has 'absolute worth'. For Kant,

Rational nature exists as an end in itself. This is the way in which a man necessarily conceives his own existence: it is therefore so far a *subjective* principle of human actions. But it is also the way in which every other rational being conceives his existence on the same rational ground which is valid also for me; hence it is at the same time an *objective* principle, from which, as a supreme practical ground, it must be possible to derive all laws for the will.¹

This passage amounts to the following three-step argument: Since (a) every rational being necessarily regards oneself as an end in itself, and accepts that (b) everyone else is justified in regarding oneself as an end in itself, (c) it is therefore an objective principle that everyone should be treated as an end in itself. The move from (a) to (b) is made possible by universalising the rational nature as existing in everyone else. It is noteworthy here that rationality or reason is not taken to be specific to particular individuals but exists in everyone else as *impersonal* reason. Hence in (c) we find an objectively valid ground to treat every human being as an end in itself, which follows from (a) and (b).

Accordingly, Kant formulates the following imperative which is known as 'the humanity principle': 'Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end' (106–7). Here, the use of the adverb 'simply' is important. Kant's point is not that we should never depend on human beings. Our day-to-day life would be impossible unless we cooperate with one another. Every time I read a book I benefit from the author, every time I write I benefit from people who have produced pen and paper, and every time I drink tea I benefit from the person who prepares a cup of tea for me. There could



Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)

be numerous examples. What Kant stresses here is that we should not regard humans simply as means to our own ends but as ends in themselves.

Kant has put forward the following justification for treating a human as an end in itself. For him, nature is a system of natural ends which are hierarchical in character. That is, one natural end is dependent on another end, in the sense that one end exists for the sake of another. For example, insects exist as food for fish and fishes exist as food for humans, and thus the hierarchical order of ends, ends with humans, for 'man is the final end of creation.'² In other words, neither does a human being as rational being exist for the

sake of anything else nor does a human being possess value in relation to anything else. Rather, a human being possesses supreme value as an end in itself, and all other ends exist and possess value for the sake of a human being. This status of a human being as prevailing over all other ends is what entitles it to possess 'dignity'.

Now, what precisely is the nature of human dignity in Kantian ethics? Kant's theory of morals is basically concerned with providing human beings with a status above anything else. In what Kant calls 'the kingdoms of ends,' persons are to be respected as ends in themselves and hence as possessing dignity. He contrasts 'value' and 'dignity': 'In the kingdom of ends everything has either a *price* or a *dignity*. If it has a price, something else can be put in its place as an *equivalent*; if it is exalted above all price and so admits of no equivalent, then it has a dignity.'³

His point is that whatever has a price or a value can be rationally sacrificed or exchanged for something else which has an equal price or value. 'Price' is possessed by all the various individual objects of desire, such as material goods or personal characteristics such as skill, diligence, humour, or strength. If I buy an expensive pen and lose it soon, and if someone then presents me a similar expensive pen which is exactly the same as the previous one, it will be just as good as my earlier pen and I will have lost nothing. The same is true of personal qualities. My intellectual abilities may, to some extent, compensate my lack of singing skills. It is because of the role that such things play in our lives that they possess value. But it is the person who gives value to these things. Hence a thing and a person should have different kinds of worth:

What is relative to universal human inclinations and needs has a *market price*; what, even without presupposing a need, accords with a certain taste—that is, with satisfaction in the mere

purposeless play of our mental powers—has a *fancy price* (*Affektionspreis*); but that which constitutes the sole condition under which anything can be an end in itself has not merely a relative value—that is, a price—but has an intrinsic value—that is, *dignity* (113).

Like the value of a thing or a personal quality, human dignity does not have market value or fancy value, and therefore it cannot be exchanged, replaced, or compensated for anything else. Further, in the case of a thing or a skill, a person can promote its value by campaigning or advertising the product or may develop the skill through rigorous training. But human dignity cannot be promoted or developed as it is *already* possessed by a person since birth, whether one is honest or dishonest, intelligent or foolish. Thus a thing has market value or fancy value, but dignity is the highest ethical value possessed by person who demands sheer respect from himself and other persons with no material gain.

Vivekananda on Human Dignity

Vivekananda belongs to the Vedantic tradition of Indian thought. He provides a reinterpretation of some key Vedantic concepts in order to enable Indians to gain lost faith in themselves and to uplift themselves from pathetic, degrading, and de-humanising social, religious, and economic conditions. So it is worthwhile to begin with the Vedantic conception of human dignity in its pristine form. Unlike the European modernist culture that has set the standard of life on materialism and consumerism, Indian culture has spirituality as the core and foundation. Spirituality being the governing principle of Indian civilisation, it provides the broad framework for dealing with the sentient and the insentient. In keeping with this spiritual tradition, the human being has been given an elevated place in Indian thought as the ultimate divine principle. In the

Chhandogya Upanishad, we find the dictum ‘*Tat tvam asi*, you are that.’⁴ This means that the Atman in all beings is identical with the supreme Self. By affirming the identification of individual self with Brahman, the status of a person is ennobled. This conception has been clearly brought out by I C Sharma:

According to the Upanishads, man is regarded as the *highest* reality, because of all the creatures of the world it is he who is self-conscious and most anxious to become infinite. In spite of finitude and imperfection man feels a great urge to attain infinity and perfection. ... In other words, man is potentially God, and the aim of all ethics is to convert this potentiality into an activity, manhood into Divinity, and relativity into Absoluteness. This is what is meant by self-realization as the goal of the Upanishadic ethics.⁵

Humans, whose reality is the Atman, are endowed with the divine light and power of Brahman. This reality is without distinctions of religion, language, race, sex, society, or nation. Though Indian society has always stressed on the status of an individual in a social hierarchy, the identification of the individual with the Divine provides a *dignity* that places any person above all social customs and strata. The human race has been addressed by the Upanishads as ‘*amritasya putrah*, children of immortality’.⁶

Swamiji concurs with this Vedantic truth, yet he differs on laying emphasis on various aspects of the dictum. He holds that emphasising the divinity of human beings would serve to make Vedanta practical by enabling the Indian masses to uplift themselves in religion, economy, and society. For him, human beings have physical and spiritual dimensions. The physical dimension consisting of biological and psychological systems exhibits a better organic unity and purpose than other beings. For Swamiji: ‘This human body is the greatest body in the universe, and a

human being the greatest being. Man is higher than all animals, than all angels; none is greater than man.’⁷ Human being’s physical nature is considered the lowest nature. But the spiritual dimension relates to the Atman of an individual, which is considered the higher nature. As Swamiji writes: ‘And Man, the Infinite, Impersonal Man, is manifesting Himself as person. We the infinite have limited ourselves, as it were, into small parts. The Vedanta says that Infinity is our true nature; it will never vanish, it will abide forever’ (2.323).

According to Swamiji, Brahman is one and impersonal. This one reality is reflected as manifold. In order to clarify this point, he takes the Vedantic analogy of reflection. Here, Brahman is compared with the sun which may shine in its reflections on water kept in different vessels, but all these reflections of the sun in water are apparent—the real sun is beyond these reflections on water. Likewise, the light of Brahman is reflected in every man, and thereby he is elevated to the status of the highest reality. Swamiji says:

The only God to worship is the human soul in the human body. Of course all animals are temples too, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of temples. If I cannot worship in that, no other temple will be of any advantage. The moment I have realized God sitting in the temple of every human body, the moment I stand in *reverence* before every human being and see God in him – that moment I am free from bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free (2.321) [Emphasis added].

Like Vedanta, Swamiji does not regard the embodied existence of the human being as entirely false. Though the embodied state of a human being is considered lower nature, yet it is the foundation of the spiritual nature and is in need of development and perfection in order to achieve the spiritual goal. When one realises that human body is the abode of God, then he

holds that 'God in human form' in high esteem and reverence, and thereby one transcends the mundane features of human beings and becomes free from all bondage.

The Points of Convergence

It must be pointed out at the outset that Kant and Swamiji have worked out their conceptions of human dignity within *two* different frameworks: Kant follows the rational tradition of the Enlightenment era of Europe, when the concept of dignity was regarded as the highest ethical value, and Swamiji sticks to the spiritual tradition of ancient India in order to uplift the degrading and dehumanising conditions of the Indian masses. Naturally, there would be differences between their views on human dignity but this difference lies at the primary and fundamental level—Kant is talking from the *ethical* perspective and Swamiji from the *spiritual* standpoint. But at the secondary level, we find several points of affinities of Kant's view with those of Swamiji on human dignity, which are as follows.

Firstly, both the conceptions of human dignity, as presented by Kant and Swamiji, have a deeply homogenising thrust, for both of them have recognised a uniform human or divine nature. Kant takes reason or rationality as an identical essence that exists in all human beings. So the notion of person, for Kant, coincides with the rational person, which implies that reason is conceived as something immutable, fixed, and universal. That is, it belongs to all men at all times. This constancy of reason that inhabits all human beings paves the way for treating them without any distinctions. Similarly, Swamiji also maintains the status of homogeneity of the divine nature of human beings. For him, all human beings are potentially divine by nature. This divinity exists in each of them as an identical essence. The notion of person coincides with 'God

in human form', which implies that divinity is conceived as immutable.

Secondly, for Kant, the identical essence of *humanity* and for Swamiji, the identical essence of divinity, demands from one and all to treat each and every person in an equal, unbiased, and impartial manner. For, at the level of humanity or divinity, according to both Kant and Swamiji, no distinction can be made among human beings in terms of caste, creed, race, sex, or religion. All are of equal worth, according to both Kant and Swamiji, as they all possess reason or Brahman as an identical essence. So these two philosophers are champions of egalitarianism.

Thirdly, according to both Kant and Swamiji, rationality or divinity is *impersonal*. That is, rationality or divinity does not vary from person to person and therefore bears no marks to distinguish a person from others. For both of them, the human persons are indifferent *thoroughfare* for impersonal rational or divine essence. Both Kant and Swamiji seem to reduce human dignity to species-dignity and do not recognise the unique and individual identity for each and every human person in terms of affiliations like religion, politics, or ethnicity.

Fourthly, since all human beings share a common nature, that is, the nature of being rational, and are equally capable of freedom, Kant argues that they have equal worth or dignity. This very rational self is the object of dignity. In other words, the human being as the embodiment of rational self is worthy of dignity. For Kant, human dignity is grasped by rising above one's contingent qualities and recognising one's essentially rational nature. Likewise, since all human beings share a common nature, that is, the nature of being divine and capable of transcendence and freedom, Swamiji argues that they have equal worth or dignity. Human beings as the embodiments of Brahman or divinity are objects of

dignity and the latter is grasped by rising above one's mundane qualities and recognising one's essentially divine nature.

Fifthly, for both Kant and Swamiji, the dignity of a person is not derived from an external source but from human or divine nature. For Kant, the dignity is inherent, intrinsic, and of inalienable moral worth. For, if someone does not treat the other with dignity as the abode of rational self, then one de-humanises the other person. Likewise, for Swamiji, dignity is not derived from an external source, but from an inherent and intrinsic source, that is, from divine human nature. For, divinity makes a human being worthy of having dignity. If someone fails to treat the other with dignity as an abode of divinity or Brahman, then he belittles the divine nature of a human being. Therefore, for both of them, to treat a human person with dignity is to recognise his moral worth as an exemplification of humanity or divinity.

Finally, both the conceptions of humanity and divinity as presented by Kant and Swamiji, have a quasi-religious or spiritual orientation. For, both of them use the term 'reverence' to describe human nature and its moral worth. On the one hand, Kant's conception of human dignity borders on *reverence*. For Kant, human beings are bearers of reason which is of supreme importance and value. It is because of possessing reason as an impersonal power that a human being is not only worthy of mere dignity but also of *reverence*. One's showing reverence to and thereby valuing shared humanity attains quasi-divine status in Kant's approach. On the other hand, for Swamiji, human beings are bearers of the divinity, which is the highest reality. It is because of possessing the divine light and power of the highest reality or Brahman that a human being not only possesses dignity but even reverence. Swamiji exhorts us to bestow highest value

to the shared divine nature of human beings, which would be synonymous with showing *reverence* to divinity in them. PB

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Mandukya Upanishad

Swami Ranganathananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

THOSE WHO CAN SEE FAR AHEAD they choose *shreya*. ‘Nachiketa, you have chosen *shreya*. Even though many *preyas* were presented to you by temptation, you didn’t accept it. You are a wonderful boy,’ Yama tells him. ‘Let me have more students like you.’ That is the beautiful language there in the *Katha Upanishad*. In my Upanishad lecture, I have discussed it beautifully with all details and what it means to you, to me, in daily life. I want a play in my heart. That play must be of this nature. Not leading to tragedy, but to joy and success, and fulfilment. And both these are within *maya*. All struggle is within *maya*. The saint prays—that is *maya*. The sinner commits sin—that is *maya*. But there is a difference between the two: one is thin, the other is thick. One is a little cover and the other is a thick cover. That is the difference between the two.

‘Under the influence of *Māyā* which is active from time without beginning’—it has been like this for ages—‘and which has the double characteristics of non-apprehending and misapprehending Reality.’¹⁶ *Avarana*, *vikshepa*. *Avarana*, it covers reality. *Vikshepa*, it projects non-reality as reality. Both it does. Just like Shankara’s example. In winter, a cloud covers the sun. That is called *avarana*, non-apprehension. But immediately, cold winds begin to blow. That is the second product of that phenomenon, troublesome. So, *avarana*, *vikshepa*. A beautiful example he has given in the *Vivekachudamani*. Especially in the Himalayan areas, when the sun goes out, you simply lose the sun. Then I can understand: you get much worse,

cold wind blows, and trouble you get like anything. That is the *vikshepa*-shakti.

‘Experiences such dreams as, “This is my father, this is my son, this is my grandson, this is my property and these are my animals, I am their master, I am happy, I am miserable, I have suffered loss on account of this, I have gained on this account”’ (ibid.). All these various judgments we make—all under the control of these two: projection, due to covering. Just like, you cover the truth of the rope and then you project a snake on it. Without covering the rope, the snake cannot come. This is the example that Vedanta always gives: this is projection; this is veiling power—*avarana*-shakti, *vikshepa*-shakti. This is well illustrated in the *Vivekachudamani*.

‘When the *Jīva* remain asleep experiencing these dreams’—I am this, I am that, in dream also you have all these: I am this, I am that, I am being throttled by somebody, even in dream you get these feelings and then you shout—in the two states of waking and dream. In both the states we have these experiences. What I am not, I experience as this and that. ‘He is then thus awakened’—when he is awakened from these two types of sleep—‘by the gracious teacher who has himself realised the Reality indicated by *Vedānta*: “Thou art not this, of the nature of cause and effect, but That thou art”’ (ibid.), the teacher tells. Then only he awakens: ‘I thought I was only this. Now I come to see I am something else. I am the infinite one.’ That is a wonderful truth. Nothing petty can come even intellectually grasping such a truth. Say, racial pride,

all these kinds of things that afflict humanity can never come close to even intellectually grasping such truth. In the nineteenth century they realised it intellectually. Then, they fought against slavery; abolished slavery. So many humanistic things came from a little intellectual apprehension of these two. When you realise it, it is quite different. 'He, then, realises his real nature. What is his nature? It (Self) is birthless, because it is beyond cause and effect' (ibid.). Unborn. Why? Because, it is beyond cause and effect. Within cause and effect, it is always born, constantly changing. Beyond cause and effect, no birth and so, no death. 'It (Self) is birthless'—ajam—'because it is beyond cause and effect and because it has none of the characteristics such as birth ... which are (inevitably) associated with all (relative) existence' (ibid.). Anything in the world of relativity is subject to these: birth, growth, development, decay, and finally death—six changes; six waves of changes from which every thing in the world is suffering.

Jayate—coming to birth; number one. Then, it is able to, say, it exists: *asti*. Only then can you say it exists. Then, it grows, *vardhate*. Then, it transforms, *viparinamate*. Then, it becomes decayed, *apakshiyate*. And, finally, it dies, *vinashyati*. It is *anidram*, sleepless. It does not mean that a *jnani* will not sleep, but he is not sleeping in the sleep of ignorance. Having realised the truth of his true nature he does sleep like anybody. In the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, we find that Sri Ramakrishna used to sleep. Jesus must have slept. Everybody has slept. But, this *anidra* is different. Non-apprehension of reality never happens once you have realised the truth; you are always in that light.

'It is *Anidram* (sleepless), because there does not exist in it *Nidra* (sleep), the cause, of the nature of the darkness of *Avidyā*, which produces the changes called birth, etc' (ibid.). That is called *nidra*. Because of *nidra*, non-apprehension, all these evils flow. In the case of

an illumined person, the *nidra* has ended. Sri Ramakrishna's song in the *Gospel* is beautiful: 'I have realised the mother and then in that state of yoga, I have put sleep to sleep.'¹⁷ This is the language that has been used. What a beautiful expression! '*Ghumere ghum padayechi*, I have put sleep to sleep for ever.' That is the language. In one of the songs in the *Gospel* you will find this.

'*Turiyā* is free from *Svapna* (dream) because it is free from *Nidra* (sleep)' (ibid.). Why it is free from dream? Because it is free from sleep. Without sleep, there is no dream. Without sleep, there is no waking. From sleep, dream and waking have come. From non-apprehension, misapprehension of reality has come. The attitude that objects are real is what you get in both dream and waking: objects are real. The idea that the subject alone is real is Vedanta. Objects are real is what non-apprehension you get as misapprehension in waking and dream.

'It is because the Self is free from sleep and dream therefore the *Jīvā*, then realises himself as the *Turiya Ātman*, birthless and non-dual' (64–5). That is the *Turiya* realisation: in samadhi we realise this truth.

'*Māyā* is said to be *Anādi* or beginningless' (65) in the sense of time. Time has no beginning. You go back farther, farther, farther, farther, and at last stop. Then why don't you go beyond it, farther? In time you can go on in this series. This series is endless, but eternity is different.

'*Prapancho yadi vidyeta nivarteta na samshayah, mayamatramidam dvaitam advaitam paramarthata*.'¹⁸ This is also an oft-quoted verse. If the perceived manifold universe were real then it certainly would disappear. If the world is real it would disappear. How do you speak of reality then? *Prapancho yadi vidyeta nivarteta*. It comes to be, it ceases to be. That is its nature. This duality that is cognised is mere illusion, *maya*, *mayamatram*, it is mere *maya*. Swamiji's lecture on

maya—two, three lectures in *Jnana Yoga* will explain this. Maya doesn't mean something in the sense of non-existence. It is; but if you question it, it cannot stand. The world is maya. It means if you question, it cannot stand and it changes to something else. Just like the clouds. Look at the clouds: you find like a city there. Then you change it, within five minutes you find another thing and then another thing. So many changes take place. The world is like that. That is Shankara's famous definition: like the cloud formation—all sorts of forms it takes as you are looking on. Non-duality alone is the supreme reality. *Prapancha* is the word. What you see in front of you, manifestation—that is relative, that is duality, multiplicity; it is unreal. The Atman, the non-dual alone is real. Non-duality alone is the supreme reality.

'If the knowledge of non-duality ... be possible', Shankara says, 'after the disappearance of the perceived manifold'—these waking and dream completely disappear and you realise the *Turiya*—'how could non-duality be said to exist (always) while the perpetual manifold remains?'¹⁹ Perpetual manifold is there and you see the Atman. How can these two go on? If you see the Atman, you cannot see the world. How is it then that it exists, when this exists? That is an important question. The jnani realises the Atman and still he sees the world. He takes food. I am sure he doesn't take the table or the chair. He takes only food, like you and me. So, manifold he sees and yet he has seen the Atman. How is it possible?

'This is explained thus: This would have been true if the manifold *really* existed' (ibid.). That is the mantra you recite during food time: '*Brahmarpanam brahma havih brahmagnau brahmanabutam, brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahmakarma samadhina.*'²⁰ Everything is Brahman: food, eater, eating, satisfaction—everything is Brahman. 'This manifold being only a false imagination, like the snake in the rope, does

not *really* exist.'²¹ The particle and the field—the particle does not exist as something separate and independent. So long as the field is there, the particle will be there. If the field is not there, where will be the particle? That is the language.

'The snake imagined in the rope, through false conception, does not *really* exist and therefore does not disappear' (ibid.). Because it does not exist, it does not disappear. Where does the world disappear? The world is not there, therefore there is no question of appearing, disappearing. It is all the Atman at that state. In this state, it constantly disappears and new worlds come—changing, changing, changing. 'Does not disappear through correct understanding. Nor, similarly, does the illusion of the vision conjured up by the magician exist and then disappear as though a veil thrown over the eyes of the spectators (by the magician) were removed' (ibid.). Rama produces one bottle and out of that, twenty bottles in one second. So many bottles are on the table. Where from has he brought it? Even now he came, took a red handkerchief put it on the hand and then he held out his hand for all to see his empty hand. Then he pushed it through the red handkerchief completely so that even the end of the handkerchief was pushed. Then he recited a mantra and then pushed it out from the other side. A blue handkerchief came out, beautiful, blue handkerchief. 'The magician alone is real and his magic unreal,' Sri Ramakrishna said.²² Politicians are the best magicians—juggling figures and all that.

'Similar is the duality of the cognized universe called the Phenomenal or manifold, *maya-matram dvaitam*',²³ which is a mere maya. That you and I have a separate consciousness is maya. Schrödinger said that there is only one consciousness; consciousness has no plural. I am glad that these acute minds of nuclear scientists can appreciate Vedanta—extremely acute minds. 'Non-duality *Turiya* like the rope and the

magician ... is alone the Supreme Reality. Therefore the fact is that there is no such thing as the manifold about which appearance or disappearance can be predicated' (ibid.).

With respect to the Atman, there is no such thing. But by itself, it is so much a manifold, constantly coming into birth, changing, dying—all that is there. 'People say that duality disappears only because they first believe in its reality' (67) of the duality. Then there is a disappearance. Don't believe in the reality of the duality.

'Supreme reality—That is, it is never absent' (ibid.). That is the meaning of the supreme reality. Particles come and go, the field remains. 'If one contends that *Turiya* does not exist when the manifold is seen'—when I see the manifold, there is no *Turiya*; *Turiya* has become the manifold; that is not correct—'we reply that manifold is nothing but Brahman' (ibid.). Particle is nothing but the field. 'Only the illusion which manifests the manifold as separate from Brahman comes and goes' (ibid.); illusion comes and goes. World is always Brahman. I see it as non-Brahman. Even then it is Brahman. Suppose I say I am a jiva—full of grief, I am this, I am that; *even* then you are only Brahman. We find this sentence in Shankara's commentary on the *Bṛihadaranyaka Upanishad*: 'Even before the knowledge of Brahman every being is Brahman and one with all.' That is the truth about you. In spite of its crying and shouting: 'bah, bah', the sheep cries; you are really a lion. You don't know your real nature. You may go on bleating. Your real nature is lion. That is the truth Vedanta wants to convey.

'This *Kārikā* deals with the crux of the *Vedānta* Philosophy. Vedanta says that non-duality (*Turiya*) alone is real and ever-existent' (ibid.). That means God alone *is*. Everything else comes and goes. 'But the opponent points out to him the fact of the existence of the universe which incontestably proves duality. If this universe be real, then non-duality

(*Turiya*) cannot be a fact' (ibid.). That is correct. 'If non-duality is realised only after the disappearance of the objective universe, then non-duality cannot certainly exist so long as the universe exists' (ibid.). That is the contention. Therefore, the Vedantin will say: 'No. Now I am weak, I am a jiva, I am limited—all these are on the truth that I am essentially the Atman. The truth is hidden and all these things are projected.' That is all.

Vedanta 'shows its boldest genius in answering this question. It at once states that non-dual Brahman alone exists' (ibid.). The word *sat*, existence, being, can be applied only to this. 'Whatever is, is nothing but Brahman' (ibid.). Table, chair, you, and I—are all Brahman. It is this, against which Narendra, the pre-monastic name of Swami Vivekananda, protested to Sri Ramakrishna when he taught this: 'What kind of nonsense philosophy are you teaching me? This talk—table is Brahman, pot is Brahman—hopeless. He went out of the room. Then Sri Ramakrishna smiled: 'He will understand it later on.' Then Narendra joined with Hazra, who was smoking there. Hazra was a proud philosopher sitting outside and both of them talked. Then they were in a jolly mood: 'See, what kind of nonsense the master is teaching: "This table is Brahman, pot is Brahman, hopeless." Like that they were making fun of the master. And the master came out and said: 'Naren, do you not still understand?' He just touched him and the whole thing changed. Everything changed. Narendra said: 'Now, I understand.' It is just a change in understanding; that is all.²⁴

'As Brahman, it always exists and never undergoes any change. If a man realises the universe as Brahman, then he is never subject to any illusion regarding its reality. The difference between a *Jñāni* and an *Ajñāni*—a knowing man and an ignorant man—is that a wise man sees the universe as Brahman and therefore never sees in it any appearance or any disappearance. But the ignorant

person believes in the reality of the universe as apart from Brahman and therefore talks about its disappearance' (ibid.). Sri Ramakrishna calls these three stages as: *ajnani*, *jnani*, *vijnani*. *Ajnani* is the ignorant man, who says that the world I see, touch, and feel is alone real; there is nothing else. The *jnani* says that this is all a mere appearance, illusion, and Brahman alone is real. The *vijnani* says that Brahman alone has become all this. Whatever you see is all Brahman only—that is *vijnana*. *Ajnana*, *jnana*, *vijnana*. *Vijnana* is the standard, from which you can conduct your life most efficiently.

'The universe as Brahman does not appear and disappear. It always is. The meaning of the disappearance of the universe really is the disappearance of one's notion of illusion (i.e., the existence of the universe as something other than Brahman)' (ibid.). The illusion changes, not the universe.

Now, this is an important subject. We see that only nuclear physicists are putting this idea in this form. There is a study on the theory of the nature of an electron by Sir James Jeans titled *The New Background of Science*. He says: 'As this is one of the most difficult parts of the new quantum theory, let us try to illustrate it by a very prosaic illustration.'²⁵ This is the language he uses in that section. What is the prosaic illustration? One John Smith went to the London office of a travelling agent and went away somewhere. Now, what is the knowledge of John Smith at present? Absolutely indeterminate: where he is, we do not know. Let us put a thick fog on the whole part of the world about John Smith. That is a fog. Then, you start with the travelling agent's office, in search of John Smith. There you get a little information. Well, a passenger by name John Smith has left by steamer three days ago to London. Then what happens? Your knowledge of John Smith becomes a fog, which disappears from everywhere else and thickens on the three-day journey to the Atlantic—somewhere there. It is called the probability

of finding John Smith; you find there. Then, where shall we find him? Alright, you are going to send a telegram, a cable, which goes at express speed to the three-day journey from London to that Atlantic Ocean. You send that cable to determine where is John Smith and then, as you come out, you run into John Smith himself; just in front. What has happened now? All that fog filling the three-day journey to the Atlantic disappears in an instant. And then John Smith is here—that knowledge comes. Now what is the nature of the disappearance? This fog will take time to disappear. But this does not take time, it is instantaneous. What is the nature of that? It is only the probability of John Smith and probabilities can travel like that. It is not the real John Smith. Very interesting illustration; almost like this language you find there. It is a fog. This fog is not the fog that delays shipping but the fog of ignorance, James says there. They have studied Shankara also. This fog is not the thick fog that delays shipping. It is the fog of ignorance, non-understanding, which quickly goes. As you see John Smith here just now, you run into him—he says; it is the language there.

The last sentence is simply marvellous. He says that when you take a final look at the universe in the light of twentieth-century physics what has happened is not that something non-material has been added to the picture, but nothing non-material has survived the picture. 'Mind reigning supreme and alone' (296). Mind alone is. Mind creates this universe. That kind of language came in physics at that time.

Disappearance of the universe means disappearance of the notion—your notion that the universe is something apart from Brahman—that goes away. 'It is like the illusion conjured up by the magician.'²⁶ It just goes. 'When the real nature of the rope is pointed out, what disappears is only the illusion which presented the rope as other than it is. The on-looker, after his error is

pointed out, realises that what he considered as snake is really the rope' (68). How quickly, when he sees the rope, snake disappears. So quickly it disappears. Ignorance disappears; the snake has not disappeared. The snake will take some time to slither away, but here, it goes immediately, because it is ignorance only. Ignorance can go. 'Knowledge removes this illusion. This illusion is unsubstantial and unreal, hence its appearance and disappearance cannot affect the nature of Reality' (ibid.). That is the great utterance.

"*Vikalpo vinivarteta kalpito yadi kenachit, upadeshadayam vado jnate dvaitam na vidyate.*"²⁷ This is also an oft-quoted verse with many commentaries. 'If anyone has ever imagined the manifold ideas (such for instance as the teacher, the taught, and the scripture), they might disappear.'²⁸ These differences are there. There is the teacher, there is the teaching, there is the taught. How can you allow this to disappear, when he is already teaching there? If you think so, they might disappear, because there is distinction, they may disappear. 'This explanation is for the purpose of teaching' (ibid.). '*Upadeshat ayam vado.*' There is such a thing as teaching, communication of ideas—taking it for granted you make a distinction: teacher, teaching, taught. Otherwise, there is no such thing. 'Duality (implied in explanation) ceases to exist when the Highest Truth is known' (ibid.). That is why in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* you read when Janaka told Yajnavalkya: 'You have promised to teach me, you teach me.' He said, 'First give me my offering, *dakshina*, then I will teach you.' But generally people take this *dakshina*, offering, after the teaching. That may be with other subjects, not this, because at the end of the teaching there will be neither the teacher nor the student. 'Give it to me now', in humour, he said.²⁹ That is the meaning of that. Where is the teacher, where is the teaching in that state? Everything is one.



Sir James Jeans (1877–1946)

'How could (duality implied in) ideas such as the teacher, the taught, and the scripture disappear?' Shankara explains: 'If such ideas had ever been imagined by someone then they might be supposed to disappear. As the manifold is like the illusion (conjured up by the magician or) of the snake in the rope, so also are the ideas of the teacher'—teaching and the taught—'These ideas, namely, the ideas of the teacher, taught, and scripture are for the purpose of teaching which are (therefore appear) true till one realises the highest truth. But duality does not exist when one, as a result of the teaching, attains knowledge ... realises the Highest Reality.'³⁰ There is no duality there. Shastra, *shasta*, and *shishya*—all are the same. The student, teacher, and the shastra—the book or science—the same truth is there for all the three. Shastra means the scripture or the science, *shishya* is the student, *shasta* is the teacher.

'Such ideas as teacher, student and scripture have their applicability till one realises the Highest Truth of non-duality (*Turiya*). Such ideas, possible only from the standpoint of ignorance, cannot contradict *Turiya* because they are unreal and negatable by knowledge' (69). What can be negated by knowledge is not real. In classical

physics, you will see a picture of the world: separate time, separate space. Nuclear physics, relativity, abolishes these things. What happened? Is it real? Yes, it is real from that standpoint of nineteenth-century physics; of an observer, separate from observed data. Then it is all right. It is not unreal. It is not false. It is real within the limitations of that world of physics. That is the language they use today. In classical physics, it is not real. In relativity physics, quantum physics, it is real. But classical physics is a limiting notion of relativity physics. That is the language they use. That is the language Vedanta always uses. 'Brahman cannot be logically inferred from the world like the fire from the smoke' (ibid.). Where there is smoke there is fire. You can infer fire by a particular indication called smoke. Here, you cannot infer Brahman. Brahman is uninferable. 'Fire and smoke are objective realities of the same order'—of *drishyam*. 'That is not so with the Brahman and the world. But the seeing of an object implies the seer. So Brahman may only be indicated' (ibid.). Brahman can only be indicated, you cannot infer. 'It has been seen in the previous *Kārikā* that the manifold is Brahman. As the wave is non-different from water, so also the world is non-different from Brahman. The idea that what we see is not Brahman has got such attributes as birth, changeability, destruction, etc., is illusion which being negated enables one to realise the Highest Truth. Similarly the various ideas one has with regard to the manifold, are non-different from Brahman' (ibid.).

In dream you see difference. In dream you cannot escape from seeing the difference. Suppose in dream you are able to see that everything is mind: 'Whatever I see in this dream, everything is mind'. Then you wake up. You cannot be in dream anymore. The misapprehension in dream cannot exist when this awakening will come to you. Mind alone is real. None of these is real and they go away in a trice. As soon as you know it is

the mind, whole dream goes away. It is an illusory knowledge. 'The Highest Truth is that the manifold as well as various thoughts associated with it are identical with *Brahman*. The non-duality (*Turiya*) alone is' (69–70). That is the truth.

Now the text of the Upanishad begins. The eighth mantra: *So'yamatma*, this Atman. I am this Atman. *Ayam* means 'this'. *Adyaksharam*—let us study it in terms of the syllable Om. *Omkarō'dhimatram pada matra, matrashcha pada akara ukaro makara iti*. 'The same *Ātman* (which has been described above as having four quarters) is, again, *Aum*, from the point of view of the syllables, *aksharam*. The *Aum* with parts is viewed from the standpoint of sounds (letters, *matrah*). The quarters are the letters (parts) and the letters are the quarters. The letters are *A*, *U* and *M* (70)—these three. 'In the word *Aum* prominence is given to that which is indicated by several names. The word *Aum* which has been explained before as *Ātman* having four quarters is again the same *Ātman* described here from the standpoint of syllable where prominence is given to the name. What, again, is that syllable? It is thus replied: *Aum*. It is that word *Aum* which being divided into parts, is viewed from the standpoint of letters. How? Those which constitute the quarters of the atman are the letters of *Aum*. What are they? The three letters are *A*, *U* and *M* (ibid.).

Then, one by one is taken.

'*Jagaritasthano vaishvanaro'karah prathama matra'pteradimattvat, va'pnoti ha vai sarvan-kamanadishcha bhavati ya evam veda*. He who is *Vaiśvānara*'—the self of the waking state—'having for its sphere of activity the waking state, is *A*'—*Vaishvanara* is *A*—'the first letter (of *Aum*) on account of its all-pervasiveness'—all letters are contained in Om; the rest are only projections of Om, from *A*—'on account of being the first' (71). The first letter is *A*. In Sanskrit, *A* is the first letter. In English also it is: a, b, c, d, and so on. This is the

common feature. ‘One who knows this attains to the fulfilment of all desires and becomes the first (of all)’ (ibid.). This is the first one.

The second one: ‘*Svapna-sthanas-taijasa ukaro dvitiya matrotkarshad-ubhayatvad-otkarshati ha vai jnanasantatim samanashcha bhavati nasyabrahmavitkule bhavati ya evam veda*. Taijasa, whose sphere of activity is the dream state, is *U*, the second letter (of *Aum*) on account of superiority or on account of being in between the two. [Between *A* and *M* is *U*, in between.] He who knows this attains to a superior knowledge’ (72).

Then finally: ‘*Sushupta-sathanah prajno makaras-tritiya matra miterapiterva minoti ha va idam sarvamatitishcha bhavati ya evam veda*. *Prājña* whose sphere is deep sleep is *M*, the third dard (letter) of *Aum*, because it is both the measure and that wherein all become one’ (73). Waking, dream—all become one in *A*. All letters become one in *M*. Because, beyond *M*, there is no further letters. Once you close the lips, you cannot produce any further sound. *A*, you begin; *M*, you end. That is called last.

‘*Prājña* associated with deep sleep is *M* ... What is the common feature? It is thus explained. ... Here appear the following śloka: ‘*Vishvasyatva-vivakshayam-adisamanyam-utkatam, matra-sampratipattau syadapti-samanyameva cha*. ... When the identity of *Viśva* and the sound (letter) *A* is intended to be described, the conspicuous ground is the circumstance of each being the first’ (75). Waking is the first state and *A* is the first sound. ‘Another reason for this identity is also the fact of the all-pervasiveness of each’ (ibid.). Waking pervades all the rest of the states. So also, the letter *A*.

‘*Taijasasyotva-vijnana utkarsho drishyate sphutam, matra-sampratipattau syad-ubhayatvam tathavidham*. ... The clear ground of realising *Taijasa* as of the same nature as *U* is the common feature of “Superiority”. Similarly another plain reason of such identity is being in

“the middle”’ (ibid.)— between the two.

‘*Makarabhava prajnasya mana-samanyam-utkatam, matra-sampratipattau tu laya-samanyameva cha*. Of the identity of the *Prājña* and *M* the clear reason is the common feature, ... they both are the “measure”. The other reason for such identity is another common feature, namely, all become one in both *Prājña* and *M*’ (76). All sounds merge in *M*.

‘*Trishu dhamasu yattulyam samanyam vetti nishchitah, sa pujiyah sarvabhutanam vandyashchaiva mahamunih*. ... He who knows without doubt, what the “common features” are in the three states, is worshipped and adored by all beings and he is also the greatest sage’ (76). That is the *Turiya*. The common feature of the all the three states, the common reality is the *Turiya*. *Turiya* as the waking self, *Turiya* as the dream self, *Turiya* as the pure consciousness of *sushupti*—that knowledge. He ‘who knows positively ... without a shadow of doubt, the common features that are found in the three states, is worshipped and adored in the world. He is a knower of Brahman’ (ibid.).

‘*Akaro nayate vishvam-ukarashchapi taijasam, makarashcha punah prajnam namatre vidyate gatih*. ... The sound (letter) *A* helps its worshipper to attain to *Viśva*, *U* to *Taijasa*, and *M* to *Prājña*. In the “Soundless” there is no attainment’ (77). You are that, soundless, *amatra*. That is the dot of Om. There is no going or coming there; no attainment there. Here only, all the things—attainments, non-attainments are there.

‘Having identified the quarters of the *Ātman* with the sounds (letters) of *Aum*, on account of the common features ... he who realises the nature of the sound *Aum* ... and meditates upon it, attains to *Viśva* through the help of *A*’ (ibid.). Attains to *Taijasa* with the help of *U*, and similarly, *Prajna* with *M*. But, *M* too disappears. Causality itself is negated in the highest state. ‘Therefore about such *Aum*, which thus becomes soundless,

no attainment can be predicated' (ibid.). This is a very subtle observation. 'It is the idea of causality that makes a man think that he realises the same world after *Susupti* which he had seen before going to sleep' (78). After *Turiya*, you never realise the same world. Everything is Atman. But from *sushupti* you come back. You see: 'The same world I left yesterday. Same relationship, the same things continue.'

Then the last verse of the Upanishad comes: '*Amatrashchaturtho*.' That is about the last dot, point, soundless. '*avyavaharyah prapan-chopashamah shivo'dvaita evamomkara atmaiva samvishatyatmanatmanam ya evam veda*. That which has no parts (soundless), incomprehensible (with the aid of the senses), the cessation of all phenomena, all bliss and non-dual *Aum*, is the fourth and verily same as the *Ātman*' (ibid.). *Turiya* is the same as this *amatra*, soundless, Om. 'He who knows this merges his self in the Self' (ibid.).

That is the last text of the Upanishad. Shankara says: 'The *amatrah* (soundless) is that which has no parts' (ibid.). It has no separate sounds and letters. Om, at least, you can divide—*A*, *U*, *M*. Last one, no separate sounds.

This partless *Aum* which is the fourth is nothing but Pure *Atman*. It is incomprehensible, because both speech and mind which correspond to the name and the object disappear or cease; the name and the object (that is indicated by the name) which are only the forms of speech and mind cease or disappear (in the partless *Aum*). It is the cessation of all the (illusion of) phenomena and all bliss and is identical with non-duality. *Aum*, as thus understood, has three sounds which are the same as the three quarters and therefore *Aum* is identical with *Ātman*. He who knows this merges his self in the Self which is the Highest Reality. Those who know Brahman, i.e., those who realise the Highest Reality merge into Self, because in their case the notion of the cause which

corresponds to the third quarter (of *Ātman*) is destroyed (burnt) (78–9).

The causality, which was embedded in the *Prajna*, in the sleep state, that is burnt. Then everything is the Atman only. Otherwise you say that from that causality the world has come. Then it goes back again for another sleep. This causality coming and going continues. But when that causality is burnt, *Prajna* alone is the Atman. *Prajna* alone is realised as the *Turiya*. 'They are not born again, because *Turiya* is not a cause' (79).

(To be continued)

Notes and References

16. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1995), 64.
17. This is Swami Ranganathananda's own translation from the Bengali original. The translation by Swami Nikhilananda is: 'O Divine Mother, made one with Thee in yoga-sleep at last, My slumber I have lulled asleep for evermore.' (M., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Chennai: Ramakrishna Math, 2002), 698).
18. Gauḍapada, *Mandukya Karika*, 1.18.
19. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, 66.
20. Bhagavadgita, 4.24.
21. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, 66.
22. *Gospel*, 787.
23. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, 66.
24. See His Eastern and Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, 2 vols (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2008), 1.95–7.
25. Sir James Jeans, *The New Background of Science* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), 241.
26. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, 67–8.
27. *Mandukya Karika*, 1.18.
28. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, 68.
29. See *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 3.1.1–3.
30. *The Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad With Gauḍapāda's Kārikā and Śaṅkara's Commentary*, 68.

Swami Premananda's Teachings

Swami Omkareshwarananda

(Continued from the previous issue)



NOTHING COMES OUT OF money alone; everything is accomplished by character and love. What did Sri Ramakrishna leave for us when he left his mortal coil? Nothing. He had left some young boys almost sitting under a tree! Could not Swamiji preach that Sri Ramakrishna was an incarnation? Instead, he said: 'Instead of lecturing, we should display through our lives, whether he was an incarnation or not.' Of what avail would it be, if instead of moulding our lives in Sri Ramakrishna's ethos, we just cry hoarse that he was an incarnation?

'Every incarnation comes in full power. The incarnation has to preach according to the needs of the age. One cannot make ornaments out of pure gold. That is why Sri Ramakrishna could not do his preaching. Since Swamiji was of sterling character, Sri Ramakrishna gave him the work of preaching his message. He did not entrust brother Ramlal with our care.

'He used to love Naren [the pre-monastic name of Swami Vivekananda] very much. Many used to say: "Just like King Jadabharata, you too will become Naren constantly thinking of him." Sri Ramakrishna replied: "What! Do I think of inert Naren? Do I think of Naren as someone's son, as someone having his house in such a place, as someone who has great knowledge, as someone who can sing or play musical instruments? Mother has shown to me that he is the very embodiment of Lord Shiva, who has taken a human form for teaching people. Thinking of such great people one gets the merit of feeding millions of monks.'

(Pausing for a while) Baburam Maharaj asked the brahmacharis: 'Do you know the story of Bharata that is in the Bhagavata?'

We are unable to resist the temptation of recounting the entire story here. The story goes thus: 'In the ancient times, India was known as Ajanabhavarsha. In the holy lineage of Manu's son, Priyavrata, was born Lord Rishabhadeva himself. He married Indra's daughter Jayanti and had one hundred sons in his likeness. Rishabhadeva's eldest son was Bharata, a yogi with great knowledge. Giving the responsibility of ruling the kingdom to Bharata and asking his other sons to obey Bharata, Lord Rishabhadeva took to monastic life. Bharata, who was a great devotee and scholar looked after his subjects with equanimity. As a testimony to his extraordinary qualities, Ajanabhavarsha came to be known as Bharatavarsha during his reign. He married Vishvarupa's daughter, Panchajani.

'The royal sage Bharata used to perform many Vedic yajnas and used to rule the kingdom offering all the fruits of his actions to God. He divided the kingdom among his sons. He gave up the world and went alone to the garden of Pulaka ashrama on the banks of the river Gandaki. He spent his days there in great joy performing internal and external austerities and the worship of God. Eventually, his heart softened by love and devotion. Other than contemplation on the unimaginable glory of God, all endeavour started losing hold on him. The thought of the holy feet of Lord Vasudeva, who was the lord of his heart, flooded his heart with emotions. One evening,

when the royal sage Bharata was sitting on the banks of river Gandaki, a pregnant deer went into the river to drink water. Then, the heart-rending roar of lion was heard from somewhere near. The pregnant deer became extremely afraid and anxious and tried immediately to cross the river with a jump. This shock broke her womb and a fawn fell into the river and the mother deer died.

‘Seeing the motherless fawn being swept away by the river, the royal sage Bharata felt pity and rescued it. He brought the fawn to his ashrama and started rearing it with great love and care. Eventually, he became lax in his spiritual practices. Though it was a constant distraction to his spiritual austerities and yoga practices, he could not stop thinking of the fawn. Soon, he was in his deathbed. Yet, he could not give up the thought of the fawn. On his death, he became a deer in his next birth.’

‘O son of Kunti, thinking of any entity whichever it may be one gives up the body at the end, he attains that very one, having been always engrossed in its thought.’

‘Sri Ramakrishna used to encourage us to read devotional texts like the *Chaitanya-Charitamrita* and *Chaitanya-Chandrodaya*. But, sometimes he used to say that all those texts are one-sided. Could I understand Sri Krishna’s *rasalila* had I not seen Sri Ramakrishna? I would have considered all those unwholesome things as “*Tejīyasam na doshaya*, one who is very powerful should be understood to be faultless.”¹⁰ I was lucky enough to be bestowed with his grace. That is why I could understand these things properly. What do impure householders understand of *rasalila*? One should not speak about it to them. Only those who are completely pure are fit to listen to those things. If impure people listen to it, it will bring them harm. Did your Sri Krishna do nothing all day, all his life, but dance tap-tap, flute in his hand? Should a devotee only think of Sri Krishna with flute in his hand and see his

dance? What is that? Sri Ramakrishna did not like that kind of one-sided attitude.’

He who thus knows truly the divine birth and actions of mine does not get rebirth after casting off the body. He attains Me, O Arjuna.¹¹

‘Don’t you know how pure he was? When coins were hidden in his cot, he could not sit on it though near it. And he lost his way after bringing some opium without asking! Can ordinary people understand all this? We can emphatically tell this because we have seen his ideal life.’

This is the incident: ‘Shambhu Charan Mallick had a garden-house near Rani Rasmani’s Kali temple at Dakshineswar. There he used to spend much time in spiritual discussions with Sri Ramakrishna. In that garden-house he also had an established charitable dispensary. Sri Ramakrishna used to frequently suffer from stomach-ache. Once, learning about his stomach-ache, Shambhu Babu advised him to take some opium and asked him to take it from him when Sri Ramakrishna would leave for Rani Rasmani’s garden. Sri Ramakrishna agreed to this. Later, both of them forgot about this in their discussion.

‘After taking leave of Shambhu Babu and walking a little, Sri Ramakrishna remembered about the opium and returned to get it, but found that Shambhu Babu had gone inside his private quarters. Not disturbing him, Sri Ramakrishna got some opium from his employee and started walking towards Rani Rasmani’s garden. But, something came over Sri Ramakrishna and he could not see anything. He felt as if someone was pulling him towards the canal on the side of the road. Sri Ramakrishna thought: “What is this? This is not the way!” Yet, he was unable to find the way.

(To be continued)

References

9. Bhagavadgita, 8.6.
10. Bhagavata, 10.33.30.
11. Gita, 4.10.

The Psychological Aspects of Spiritual Life

Swami Nityasthananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

THERE IS A MARKED DIFFERENCE between following Sri Ramakrishna's ideal and identifying oneself with him. It is supremely good to follow his spirit of renunciation, but one should not go on throwing coins and clay into the Ganges telling: 'Rupee is clay, clay is rupee.'¹⁷ Accepting a great personality as our role-model and following his ideals in our own way is no doubt good, but to consider ourselves to be that very personality is unbecoming. In fact, identification betrays our inability to follow the ideal sincerely. That is why perhaps, Sri Krishna warns: 'It is good to die following one's own dharma, but it is indeed frightful to take up others' dharma.'¹⁸

There is difference between imitation and identification. Imitation is due to a lack of self-respect and also due to a feeling of inferiority because of which we imitate the manners, dress, lifestyle, and so on, of those whom we consider superior to us. It is not due to frustration of some impulses as in the case of identification, it is just blind imitation.

Projection • When we are unsuccessfully trying to control some tendency in us which is creating feelings of guilt, we become resentful seeing the same tendency in others. What we do not want to see in us, we project it outside and see in others. Finding fault with others, backbiting—all these are different forms of projection. One who hates others thinks that others hate oneself. Ken Wilber says: 'Our carping criticism of other people is

really nothing but unrecognized bits of autobiography ... We feel the world hates us only because we are unaware of the small part of our selves that gently hates the world.'¹⁹ If the flower were to be conscious of itself, it would think that the crystal beside it is colourful seeing its own colour in it.

Swami Yatiswarananda humorously points out this tendency in us: 'A drunken man was taken before a magistrate who asked his police escort, "What gave you the impression that the prisoner was the worse for drink?" The policeman answered, "He was arguing with a taxi driver." "That does not prove anything", said the judge. "But, sir", persisted the officer, "there was no taxi driver."²⁰ James Allen very aptly states: 'A man is continually revolting against an effect without, while all the time he is nourishing and preserving its cause in his heart.'²¹

There is another kind of projection where what is projected is not the unwelcome impulse, but the moral sentiment which condemns it. For instance, being defensive against imaginary criticism. Some people unnecessarily imagine that others dislike them because of some shortcomings of theirs, being themselves critical of those shortcomings. If somebody behaves indifferently towards them, they imagine that the person does not like them; because they themselves are guilty of their shortcomings.

There is yet another form of projection.

Someone takes some loan, borrows some books or some other objects from another person, and does not return them in time. When asked to return it, that person blames the lender for being greedy of things, instead of seeing one's own mistake of not returning the things in time. The lender, if too sentimental, may perhaps feel guilty for asking the things back. According to psychologists, there are two classes of people: The first are neurotics, who blame themselves for everything. If some unpleasant things happen, they suffer mentally, thinking that they might be somehow responsible. The other class of people are those having personality disorders, who blame others for everything, never admitting their own mistakes. 'The problem of distinguishing what we are and what we are not responsible for in this life is one of the greatest problems of human existence.'²²

It is said: 'O king, a person sees a defect in others even if it is as small as a mustard seed, but never sees his own even if it is as big as *bilva* fruit.'²³ There is another Sanskrit saying expressing the same idea: 'One sees the defects of others without seeing one's own. If one sees one's own, he will not see the defects of others.'

Rationalisation • This is the tendency of giving a convincing reason to justify that what one does is the right thing. It is defined in psychology: 'As hunting for arguments to justify us in doing what we want to do, or believing what we want to believe and, having found the arguments, specious or otherwise, convincing ourselves that they were the real motives that led to our belief or action.'²⁴ Through this kind of rationalisation one might fulfil one's own selfish ends with the means of philanthropic activities. We may justify some of our spiritually unfair actions and words by convincing ourselves that in a particular situation they are unavoidable.

We try to satisfy our desire for social adulation in the name of spreading the message of a great spiritual personality. Some are addicted to constructing buildings, but that is camouflaged by the idea of doing good to society. Sometimes our worldly attachments are disguised as duties. Our great achievements are primarily meant for gratifying our ego, which fact we seldom accept. Even if we cannot accept this truth in front of others, if we can do so to ourselves, then we can try to correct ourselves. Instead, if we go on justifying our actions, we will slowly distance ourselves from the spiritual ideal. We have to dispassionately recognise the real motives behind our every action and correct ourselves accordingly.

Anthony De Mello says: 'I have always dropped out for the best of reasons: to reform the liturgy, to change church structure, to update the study of scripture and to make theology relevant. Religious activity is my favourite escape from God.'

(To be continued)

References

17. Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna and His Divine Play*, trans. Swami Chetanananda (St Louis: Vedanta Society of St Louis, 2003), 518.
18. Bhagavadgita, 3.35.
19. Ken Wilber, *The Spectrum of Consciousness* (Wheaton: Quest, 1993), 191.
20. Swami Yatiswarananda, *Meditation and Spiritual Life* (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2009), 101-2.
21. James Allen, *As A Man Thinketh* (Camarillo: DeVorss, 1948), 8.
22. M Scott Peck, *The Road Less Travelled* (London: Rider, 2008), 25.
23. *Garuda Purana*, 1.113.57.
24. Rex Knight and Margaret Knight, *A Modern Introduction to Psychology* (London: University of Aberdeen, 1948), 197-8.

Sri Ramakrishna: Scriptures Embodied

Swami Kritarthananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

In the Trail of Scriptures

SRI RAMAKRISHNA, with his photographic memory and strong power of *medha*, absorbed a vast knowledge of scriptures and even the commentaries thereof by merely listening to the discussions of scholars. In later years he would serve like an affectionate mother the spiritual aspirants coming to him for advice and guidance with that unceasing flow of nectar as per the level of fitness of the aspirant. Hearing those words even the renowned scholars would wonder as to the source of Sri Ramakrishna's knowledge. A few such examples will clarify the point under discussion.

Once Sri Ramakrishna went to see Ishvar Chandra Vidyasagar, hearing of his vast scholarship and compassionate, charitable nature. In his judgement men of such rare combination of character are sure to have got a speck of the Divine Mother's powers. And there, in the course of discussion, he spoke out such a truth which was brand new even to a scholar like Vidyasagar. Speaking on Brahman, he said: 'All things in the world ... have been defiled ... for they have been read or uttered by the tongue. Only one thing has not been defiled in this way, and that is Brahman. No one has ever been able to say what Brahman is.'¹¹ But even though Vidyasagar had never heard such apt illustration before, it already existed in the *Jnana-sankalini Tantra*.¹²

Sri Ramakrishna often cited the illustration

of some kind of devotees adopting a tricky way to extract a number of boons from God in the name of one boon. 'Once the Divine Mother was pleased with a man's austerities and said to him, "You may ask a favour of Me." "O Mother", said he, "if You are so pleased with me, then grant that I may eat from a gold plate with my grandchildren." Now, in one boon the man got everything: grandchildren, wealth, and gold plate.'¹³ This is a very oft-quoted illustration used in many scriptural contexts by renowned commentators, and is known as *Vriddha-kumari-vara-nyaya*, the maxim of the boon of the old virgin. So is the story of four blind men visiting an elephant (191). Acharya Shankara illustrated the same story in his commentary on the *Chhandogya Upanishad*.¹⁴

Shankara and other commentators of scriptures have often cited picturesque examples from everyday life in order to simplify or illustrate an intricate argument. Sri Ramakrishna also did the same to drive home certain difficult points. For example, demonstrating how people foolishly depend on hearsay leaving aside direct vision, Sri Ramakrishna made a sardonic statement one day:



‘A man said to his friend, “Yesterday ... I saw a house fall with a crash.” “Wait,” said the friend. “Let me look it up in the newspaper.” But this incident wasn’t mentioned in the paper. Thereupon the man said, “But the paper doesn’t mention it.” His friend replied, “I saw it with my own eyes.” “Be that as it may,” said the friend, “I can’t believe it as long as it isn’t in the paper.”’¹⁵ The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* makes a similar statement: ‘If even today two persons come disputing, one saying, “I saw it”, and another, “I heard of it”, we believe him only who says, “I saw it.”’¹⁶ Commenting on this statement, Acharya Shankara says: ‘What a man hears of may sometimes be false, but not what he sees with his own eyes. So we do not believe the man who says, “I heard of it.”’¹⁷ That is why, people jokingly say that the difference between truth and falsehood is ‘four inches’, meaning the distance between the eye and the ear.

In order to know the real worth of a valuable thing like a diamond, one must go to the right person who can evaluate its worth, to wit, a jeweller. Sri Ramakrishna used to tell his devotees the story of a rich man with a diamond.¹⁸ Acharya Shankara, in his commentary on the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, said the same thing: ‘It is seen in the world that a professional trader of jewels can recognize the worth of a jewel much better than a hunter who finds it perchance.’¹⁹ In speaking about the secret of creation, Sri Ramakrishna would say: ‘After the destruction of the universe, at the end of a great cycle, the Divine Mother garners the seeds for the next creation. ... After the creation the Primal Power dwells in the universe itself.’²⁰ Strikingly enough, Acharya Shankara, the exponent of Advaita Vedanta, also spoke of a similar phenomenon. He said in his commentary on the *Brahma Sutra*: ‘When this universe gets dissolved, it dissolves by keeping its latent power intact, and the next creation emerges from that latent power.’²¹ Another illustration given

by Sri Ramakrishna is cited here: ‘A man once said, “There are many horses in my uncle’s cowshed.” From that one could know that the man had no horses at all. No one keeps a horse in a cowshed.’²² This is also an echo of Acharya Shankara’s commentary on the *Brahma Sutra*: ‘Unless one is a fool, one will not conclude by seeing a cow in a stable that it must be a horse.’²³

(To be continued)

Notes and References

11. M., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (Chennai: Ramakrishna Math, 2002), 102.
12. ‘Uchchishtam sarva-shastrani sarva-vidya mukhe mukhe, nochchishtam brahmano jnanam avyak-tam chetanamayam, all scriptures and knowledge have been defiled by many mouths; the knowledge of Brahman has not been defiled and this consciousness absolute has not been expressed yet.’ (*Jnana-sankalini Tantra*, 52).
13. *Gospel*, 647.
14. See Acharya Shankara’s commentary on the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, 5.18.1.
15. *Gospel*, 789.
16. ‘Yad idanim dvau vivadamanau eyatam, aham adarsham, aham ashrausham iti, ya evam bruyad aham adarsham iti, tasma eva shraddadhyama.’ (*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 5.14.4).
17. ‘Shrotur mrisha shravanam api sambhavati. Na tu chakshusho mrisha darshanam. Tasmanna ashrausham iti uktavate shraddadhyama.’ (Acharya Shankara’s commentary on *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, 5.14.4).
18. See *Gospel*, 759–60.
19. ‘Drishtam hi loke vanik-shabarayoh padmargadi-manivikraye vanijo vijnanadhikyat phaladhikyam.’ (Acharya Shankara’s commentary on *Chhandogya Upanishad*, 1.1.10).
20. *Gospel*, 135.
21. ‘Praliyamanam api cha idam jagat shaktyavashesham eva praliyate. Shaktimulam eva cha prabhavati.’ (Acharya Shankara’s commentary on the *Brahma Sutra*, 1.3.30).
22. *Gospel*, 316.
23. ‘Na hi ashvastthane gam pashyan ashvo’yam iti amudhah adhyavasyati.’ (Acharya Shankara’s commentary on the *Brahma Sutra*, 1.4.1).

Svarajya Siddhih of Gangadharendra Sarasvati —Attaining Self-dominion

Swami Narasimhananda

(Continued from the previous issue)

REPPLY: WHAT IS THE NATURE OF *alaya-vijnana-dhara*? Is it the same as *kshanika-vijnana*, momentary state of consciousness or is it different? If it is the first, that is, if it is the same as *kshanika-vijnana*, then it would be the same as stating that the same reality is being perceived as having different names and forms and so would be identical to our standpoint. If it is the second, that is, if it is different from *kshanika-vijnana*, due to the non-contact with the preceding and the succeeding moment, there is no scope of communication and there is no possibility of the same standpoint being accepted since they are disconnected. Hence, there can be no connection between the desire and enjoyment and there cannot be the creation of an aggregate since that would not be logical.

Further, you hold that the enjoyer, who is meant for enjoyment, is not constant. However, enjoyment is only for being enjoyed by the enjoyer and cannot be desired by any other. Similarly, liberation is to be attained only by the person seeking liberation, the spiritual aspirant. Who would experience the enjoyments and who would get moksha or liberation? The idea is that going by your argument, no one would get moksha. Further, the futility of your standpoint is being established. O fool! Your philosophy or standpoint is successful by what result? It surely is not successful by

experience, because experience is not possible according to your thought. You also preach against the experience of enjoyment and advise to perform spiritual austerities and restrain the senses, and also lead a life of renunciation. Also, your school of thought cannot be said to be successful on account of moksha, since you do not believe in the permanence of the Atman till one attains moksha as holding such a standpoint would go against your philosophy. Moksha is the cessation of all sufferings. According to your school of thought everything is momentary and so, suffering too is momentary and would be destroyed the very next moment. Hence, all spiritual austerities that you preach are useless because not only are they not required, they do not produce anything.

The Advaitic refutations of Buddhist thought can be better understood from the analysis by Acharya Shankara in his commentary on the *Brahma Sutra*:

Even if the combination be supposed to arise from either of the two sets of causes, that will not materialize, that is to say, no combination will result—be it either a combination of the elements and the elementals arising from the atoms, or a combination of the five groups of things arising from those groups. ...

Because the components of such a combination are insentient and because consciousness can flash (from a contact between sense-organs

and objects) only if a combination of things (forming the body etc.) is already there, and because no other steady and independent entity is admitted which is sentient, an experiencer, and a ruler, and which can bring about the combination. If impulsion to activity be postulated for them independently of any agent, then there will be the possibility of such impulsion continuing interminably. Again, since currents (of ego-consciousness) cannot be determined to be either different or non-different (from the individual forms of consciousness constituting the current), and since everything (including the current) is supposed to be momentary, there can be no activity (in this momentary current), and hence no impulsion (apart from its own birth). Therefore a combination cannot emerge, and in the absence of combination, all mundane existence dependent on it will be nullified. ...

Buddhist: Even if no sentient and steady experiencer or ruler be admitted as the agent bringing about the combination, still the transmigratory existence will be possible, since nescience and the rest are the causes of one another; and if the transmigratory existence becomes a possibility, there remains no need for depending on anything else. Those nescience etc. are: nescience (the idea of permanence with regard to things momentary), attitudes (attachment, detachment, and delusion arising from that false knowledge), ego-consciousness, name (i.e. the four elements depending on names), form (or colour), the six sense-organs (having egoism, four elements, and form as their habitations), touch (contact among name, form, and senses), sensation, thirst (for objects), impulsion (caused by that thirst), merit etc. (which are the sources of birth), birth (of the body), maturity (of the groups coming into being), death, sorrow, wailing, pain, misery, etc. (i.e. evils like honour, dishonour, etc.)—these and others of the same class which are sometimes indicated briefly or sometimes state elaborately in the books of the Buddhists. These categories cannot be denied by other schools as well. So may it not be that when

these nescience and the rest go on revolving for ever like (the cups in) a Persian wheel, as the cause and effect of one another, a combination of things, emerging out of the force of circumstances, becomes a possibility?

Vedāntin: That cannot be so. ...

Because they are merely the causes of the origination (of one another). A combination may be possible if any cause for the combination can be ascertained; but as a fact, it cannot be ascertained. For although nescience etc. be the causes of one another, the earlier ones will merely give rise to the later ones. That may well be so; but nothing can possibly become the source of a combination.

Buddhist: Did we not mention earlier that nescience and the rest (revolving in order) lead to the assumption of the existence of a combination by implication?

Vedāntin: To this we say: If your idea is that since nescience etc. cannot emerge unless there is a combination (in the form of a body), therefore they, as a matter of course, imply its existence, then you have still to tell me the cause of that combination. But in the course of examining the Vaiśeṣika theory we said that this is not possible even on the assumption of permanent atoms and experiencing souls which can sustain the acquired merits; and can this be possible here, my dear friend, simply by assuming momentary atoms which have no experiencers and which are not related with everything by way of being the abider and the abode (or the benefited and the benefactor)? On the other hand, if this be your idea that nescience and the rest themselves constitute the source of combination, then how can they be the source of that combination when they themselves have to emerge into being by depending on that combination?¹⁰⁸

(To be continued)

References

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TRADITIONAL TALES

Bless Your Enemies!

THERE LIVED A VAISHNAVA MONK in Ayodhya. Once he had to go to a place by crossing the Sarayu river. It was rainy season. Dense black clouds had gathered in the sky and rain was imminent. Hence, the monk walked briskly towards Sarayu, which was flooded due to recent rains. The monk reached the banks of the river and saw a boat ready to depart. The boat was crowded with rich and proud people. Seeing the monk, they thought that he should not be allowed to travel with them and started making fun of him and his dress.

The people together shouted at the monk: 'There is no room on the boat. We ourselves are squeezed here. You wait and come in the next trip.' They were unwilling to take the monk with them but, instead of directly telling so, they were indirectly conveying it.

Evening had set and darkness was spreading. If that boat was missed, it was doubtful whether

there would be another boat trip that night. In that night with strong wind and flooded river, no boatperson would be willing to sail. The monk realised that there was no chance of getting another boat and so, he thought of boarding that boat and crossing the river. He requested the boatperson to let him aboard the boat. The boatperson understood the situation and after thinking awhile, said: 'Please get aboard the boat.' Then he made room for the monk in a corner of the boat.

The people on the boat tried to prevent the monk from boarding the boat by citing various reasons. However, by God's grace, their attempts failed. The monk sat in the boat unmindful of the obstacles that were being created by other people. His lips were repeating the holy name of God.

The people who had thought that the monk should not be allowed on the boat were

dismayed. They made faces at the monk showing their displeasure on his being on the boat. They were extremely angered and thought: 'This nomad has got on the boat!' They also cursed him mentally: 'Alright, you have boarded the boat in spite of us advising against it. We will teach you a proper lesson and bring you to your senses.'

Though the monk was sitting silently in a corner of the boat, other people on the boat said and did things to hurt him. The monk had no ill-feeling against those people. Anger and hatred were unknown to that monk. He never even thought of causing any harm to others. He was untouched by the abuses other people were hurling at him. The monk was repeating the holy name of God with closed eyes according to a habit that had become instinctual with him. In a short while, he lost all external consciousness and was immersed in deep meditation. Hence, he was in a state that was beyond heeding the derisive talk of others.

The boat was in the middle of the river. The wind was blowing hard. The passengers continued their 'holy work' of mocking the monk. The monk, on the other hand, was silent, totally oblivious to the external world. The monk's silence only increased the anger of the other passengers. Some started throwing the river water on the monk's face with their hands. The monk was drenched. Even then, being in deep meditation, he had no change. He was immersed in the thought of God, with closed eyes. Seeing this, the anger of the passengers increased further. A ruffian struck a heavy blow on the monk's neck. This was followed by many people beating the monk. However, bereft of any body-consciousness, the monk was unaware of others beating him.

The other passengers came to a decision: 'He is not opening his eyes even when water is

thrown upon him. He does not move even when beaten. Now, the only way to get rid of him is to drown him.' Deciding thus, all of them tried to move the monk and push him into the river. True monks have enormous patience. We see this in the entire history of humanity. But, God could no longer bear the troubles people were causing to his loving devotee. When the passengers were trying to push the monk into the river, they heard a voice from the sky: 'O monk! Just say it and with your permission I will destroy these evil people by drowning them.'

Everyone on the boat started shaking with terror after hearing these words that issued like a thunderbolt. They froze with fear. Their faces reddened. Those who had tortured the monk the most, were seeking mercy. Some were motionless like stones with fear. Some had their stomachs churning. Some were losing breath out of fear.

The monk regained external consciousness on hearing the voice from the sky. Coming out of meditation, he immediately understood the plight of the passengers. The next moment, he heartfully prayed to God with folded hands: 'O my loving merciful Lord! Are not these people your children? If you do not forgive them and grace them, who will? They are ignorant of who they are and what they are doing. O Lord! On account of your love for me, I beseech you to heed to my prayer and forgive and grace these children of yours. Please remove their fear and bestow your grace upon them. Please grant them peace. Please be merciful and accept these loving children of yours. Please let them have sincere devotion at your lotus feet.'

God listened to the monk's prayer. The people who caused trouble to the monk were reformed into gentle people and became great devotees.



REVIEWS

For review in PRABUDDHA BHARATA,
publishers need to send **two** copies of their latest publications



Swami Vireswarananda: A Divine Life (2 vols)

Edited by

Swami Satyamayananda

Swami Vireswarananda Smriti Committee, 1/1, Ramlochan Shire Street,
PO: Belur Math, Howrah 711 202.
Email: srima.chowdhury@rediffmail.com. 2015. 2 vols. 698 + 412 pp. HB.
₹ 300.

‘What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what is inside of you.’—Ralph Waldo Emerson

The spiritual version of the popular and the essentially political phrase ‘from log-cabin to White House’ may be conceived according to the Ramakrishna-Order lexicon as, ‘from an aspiring spiritual novice to a knower of God’. The exciting story of the ascent of an earthly spiritual novice to the sublime heights of a first-rate mentor shouldering the onerous responsibilities of piloting the divine spiritual liner of the Ramakrishna Order should certainly make an evocative read. The two-volume tome under review is precisely such a delightful narrative that charts the path of the meteoric rise of a spiritual aspirant to the pre-eminent position of the head of the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission by the sheer dint of his lofty spiritual credentials. It is the inspiring tale of an unostentatious Brahmachari Panduranga steadily evolving and eventually ripening into a sober sannyasi with a burning passion for quietly initiating and executing myriad measures to take the renowned Ramakrishna Order to higher and higher plateaus of growth.

The gripping narrative that surpasses a first-rate fiction in its appeal abounds with spicy anecdotes, vivacious vignettes, jocular remarks, solemn sermons, sparkling stories, and poignant portrayals sustained throughout by the basal tone of high moral earnestness and spiritual purpose. It

can be likened to an ecstatic ensemble that enraptures by its simple rhythms, captivating cadences and concordant notes. Each and every anecdote mentioned in the book is not only informative, but also educational and throws a floodlight on the different facets of the illustrious president’s many-splendoured personality.

Swami Vireswarananda’s master trait that logically defined and determined the contours of his picturesque psychological landscape was his unwavering and single-minded guru-bhakti—his inflexible devotion to his foremost preceptor, Sri Ramakrishna, the greatest of incarnations. All his thoughts and actions were solely dictated by Sri Ramakrishna’s spiritual code. To him, the touchstone of any course of action was the infallible judgement of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda. His final courts of appeal, while in confusion and doubt, were these three. His virtue of self-effacement was the direct corollary of his profound devotion for Sri Ramakrishna, to whose unbounded grace he attributed all his mundane and spiritual achievements.

A perusal of the book shows Swami Vireswarananda as a joyful but stern ascetic, a living rebuttal of the mischievous myth that a genuine monk should, of necessity, be a kill-joy and a pathetic specimen of a grave misanthrope who refuses to, in the words of Shakespeare, ‘show their teeth in way of smile, though Nestor swear the jest be laughable’ (*The Merchant of Venice*, Act 1, Scene 1). Swami Vireswarananda was a full-blooded humourist capable of cracking innocent jokes and also of vastly enjoying them. He was of small and frail build but a formidable giant among religious luminaries. In him shone steadily the incandescent flame of deep spiritual ardour and firm moral commitment. He was a standing testimony to the dictum that what, in the final analysis, matters is not so much the flamboyance of the exterior as the fullness of the interior. Many episodes in his

life show him as a happy blend of such contrary qualities like solemnity and sportiveness, self-discipline and suaveness, self-abnegation and self-assertiveness, and strictness and softness. He was friendly but not partial, polite but not obsequious, compassionate but not condescending, firm but not obstinate, and self-confident but not self-conceited. The salient features of his rich profile were utter simplicity, skill in the lucid exposition of spiritual themes, care of propriety, absence of any personal axe to grind, deep erudition in scriptures, rock-like reliability, self-effacing humility, extreme disdain for self-publicity, efficiency in administration, uncanny skill in the art of combining 'life and super-life', and dexterity in reconciling spiritual practices with mundane chores. He had a strong spirit of renunciation and non-hoarding—of *sannyasa* and *aparigraha*, a spirit of exemplary detachment, magnificent obsession with the development of the Ramakrishna Order, love and respect for the subordinates. He had the highest veneration for Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, who alone, in his judgement, deserved birthday celebrations and he consequently disapproved celebration of his own birthday or any gesture of acclamation. He possessed a high degree of probity in financial dealings, skill in the art of storytelling, intense dispassion, penchant for harmless fun-making, razor-sharp intellect, renown as a veritable linguist, and fame as a person of bravery, rationality, and curiosity. His philosophy of action as key to final beatitude was shaped by the pithy formula of Swami Vivekananda, lucidly enunciated in the immortal phrase: '*Atmano mokshartham jagat hitaya cha*; for one's own salvation and for the good of the world.' He strongly recommended an integrated action plan in which personal acts of worship and meditation should be dovetailed with the selfless service of humanity. He was the one who was responsible for the establishment of the Sarada Math, Swami Vivekananda's dream. His enviable qualities triggered his laudable behaviour whose nuances have been duly recorded in the articles contained in this admirable anthology.

The numerous anecdotes reminisced and related in this book constitute a brilliant commentary on the interior altitudes of his fascinating

personality. His love for harmless fun-making manifests in a curious anecdote that goes like this:

After lunch Swami Dayananda [who was extremely fond of cats] was taking rest. Suddenly his sleep was interrupted. He heard a cat's mewing by the side of his window. No sooner had he heard the mew than he left his bed. Before reaching the window he heard the mew again. He ran to the window and looked out. Lo! It was his friend Prabhu [Swami Vireswarananda], and not a cat. Swami Vireswarananda saw his friend and mewed again. Both of them burst into a roar of laughter (1.86).

Incidentally, this episode demonstrates Swami Vireswarananda's flair for mimicry.

His conviction of the pre-eminence of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda as the trinity of spiritual titans, solely worthy of adoration, is exemplified by his disapproval of any praise for him. He bluntly remonstrated with his devotees: 'Sri Sri Thakur, Sri Sri Ma and Swamiji are the only ones who matter in the Ramakrishna Sangha. We are to chant their holy names only and of nobody else; this is the legacy of our Sangha' (1.82).

Swami Vireswarananda's sublime spiritual qualities are too numerous to highlight and expatiate on even in a lengthy review. While the first part of the first volume of this two-volume work chronicles his divine life in graphic detail and reproduces Swami Vireswarananda's 128 letters, the second part of the same volume is an anthology of insightful and touching articles containing the reminiscences of a band of foremost monks, the lieutenants of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda, in the vanguard of their divine mission. The second volume comprises parts two, three, and four consisting an anthology of admirable articles containing glowing tributes to the memory of Swami Vireswarananda by the nuns of Sarada Math and also by many prominent lay devotees, a collection of the teachings of Swami Vireswarananda, a compilation of his essays.

On reading this book, the image of Swami Vireswarananda that emerges in the mind of the reader fully answers the pen-picture so vividly etched by Acharya Shankara in a verse in his magnum opus, *Vivekachudamani*: 'The guru is

well-versed in the Vedas; he is sinless; he is not tormented by desire; he is a knower of Brahman; he is super-eminent; withdrawing himself into Brahman, he is ever at peace; he is like a smouldering fire unfed by fuel. The guru is the ocean of unmotivated compassion. He is a friend to the noble who make obeisance to him' (*Vivekachudamani*, 35).

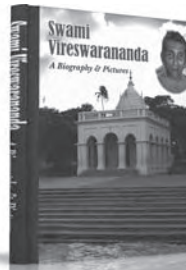
This two-volume sacred treatise may aptly be called *Sat-smarana Ratnamalika*, a gem-necklace of holy reminiscences. A perusal of this absorbing narrative shows the infinite possibilities of spiritual quest and growth open to any earnest spiritual aspirant and also the astounding altitudes of divinity attainable by the worthy heirs to Sri Ramakrishna's rich spiritual legacy.

The unshakable conviction of the true devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, is that there is, behind all their noble endeavours, his unseen hand. Viewed in this light, it was he who deposited the seed of the lovely rose sapling of this book in the devout mind of the editor who nurtured the sapling with great care and carried out the much needed act of pruning and shaping of the plant with skill and sagacity. And we have this beautiful rose plant smiling with 111 variegated and multi-hued rose flowers of life-sketch, reminiscent essays, collection of teachings, and compilation of essays, diffusing their heady fragrance. May the fortunate ones enjoy the exotic fragrance!

The two volumes comprising four parts are a fine hardbound set with precious contents, professionally edited by Swami Satyamayananda, the previous editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*. This two-volume set should make a prized possession, as it has the double merit of being a sumptuous repast for the mind and a delicious feast for the eyes. While its 111 essays regale the mind with their depth and variety, the 184 glossy photographs, mostly in colour, are nectarine feast for the eyes. On opening the charming book, we are greeted by an array of colourful photographs of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda, and Swami Vireswarananda, the hero of the treatise, and of the nine monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, who gave valuable spiritual guidance to Swami Vireswarananda. The thoughtful design and layout of the book is a tribute to the resourcefulness and creative imagination of the

people behind it as it is bound to lift the mood of the readers to the requisite lofty level of solemnity and veneration to enable them to be readily receptive to the sanctifying ideas of the sublime narrative. The holy treatise should be possessed and perused by the vast circle of spiritually-inclined readership as it is a spiritual elixir from which they can, at any time, draw copious draughts of wisdom for their spiritual regeneration. This book is certainly a feather in the cap of the enterprising editor. The price indicated for the wonderful book marked by fecundity of thoughts, felicity of expression, and finality of conviction is undoubtedly a measly one.

N Hariharan
Madurai



**Swami Vireswarananda:
A Biography and Pictures**

Compiled and Edited by
Swami Chaitanyananda

Swami Vireswarananda Smriti
Committee. 2014. 252 pp. HB. ₹ 750.

Living in a monastic community is one of the most self-abnegating tasks that a monk is called to live out from one mundane day to the other. To live amongst strangers and those whom one has not chosen by one's own free will is a form of self-sacrifice which only a monk can understand. Swami Vireswarananda, the tenth president of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission, lived in and guided a monastic order that is truly cosmopolitan. We may choose to ignore this fact of linguistic and socio-cultural differences among monks, but if we are to really understand the life of Swami Vireswarananda, we have to understand the Ramakrishna Order. This order has amongst its monastic ranks, men of various religions who, while respecting their religions of birth, chose and continue to choose Advaita Vedanta as their *raison d'être* of existence; striving to experience the supreme Godhead qua Brahman in the *here and the now*. This order of monks is a sign that cosmopolitanism is possible amidst heteroglossia. Swami Vireswarananda through his own life grounded in the Brahman-experience made the ideas of Brahman simpler for many.

The book under review, compiled and edited by Swami Chaitanyananda and published by Swami Vireswarananda Smriti Committee traces the life-trajectory of Swami Vireswarananda, who experienced the Atman. The pictures say it all. The copious notes accompanying each picture further clarify the evolution of the human to the divine. This book begins by situating Swami Vireswarananda within his religio-historical context or lineage (9–15). Swami Chaitanyananda's editorial expertise is evident since while he begins by mapping the young Panduranga's genealogy in page 10, by page 15 we get to see and know the future monk's real genealogy—his monastic pedigree as it were. A jiva who would be transformed into a knower of Brahman by the spiritual son of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Brahmananda, who mentored the young novice who began his monastic or real life at the Order's Chennai Math. The ten Mahavidyas had reincarnated as the Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi. It was Shakti herself, who initiated Swami Vireswarananda (27). Swami Chaitanyananda is careful throughout this book to emphasise the vanity of this world and the importance of the detestation of all that is worldly. For example, we have the anecdote of Swami Turiyananda cautioning a monk against even indirectly appreciating a house, which is meant for worldly purposes (38). Hindu ideas of sannyasa brook no dependence on other humans. Swami Vireswarananda was truly not of his earthly parents, but of the Totapuri *gotra* of Advaitin sannnyasins: 'In every action, in everything you have to be conscious and get rid of the Vasanas by practice and also by "Vairagya"; dispassion and by spirit of renunciation. ... there is no other way' (146).

This dispassion and renunciation are the hallmarks of a Hindu monk and Swami Chaitanyananda's incessant highlighting of these aspects of Swami Vireswarananda's life is proper since the Hindu monk is not mere flesh but the Atman. Therefore, to highlight any other aspect of Swami Vireswarananda's life is superfluous and practically useless. His life is worth studying and reflecting upon not just because he became the tenth president of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission, but because he embodied the *sangha* in a way that few could. The

photos in this book have been painstakingly retrieved from various archives and—along with the two volumes of *Swami Vireswarananda: A Divine Life* edited by Swami Satyamayananda, the previous editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*—should be mandatory reading for those interested in the Ramakrishna Order or Hindu monasticism. The facsimiles of letters with Swami Vireswarananda's handwriting are of immense value (212–9).

Darshana or the act of seeing is a reciprocal event. Swami Chaitanyananda's book facilitates the act of seeing the veritable body of Sri Ramakrishna—each page of this book demands us to respond to the ancient anthropomorphic call to renunciation that we find in all major and the minor Upanishads. This book modifies our perspective and forces us to become noble and more spiritually inclined. This book's 'cultural work' lies in making us aware of the need for Vedanta in a world wracked with violence and desire. Swami Vireswarananda showed the world that 'service to humanity is' not 'the antithesis of Vedanta ... One who says' that Vedanta is antithetical to the service of humanity 'has not realised the essence of Vedanta' (195). One very important point needs to be mentioned in discussing Swami Vireswarananda. He never pointed to himself as the locus of spirituality and divinity, but always and unfailingly pointed to Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sarada Devi, and Swami Vivekananda for spiritual sustenance. And thus this book under review does not begin with his photograph, but those of these three personages, who made Swami Vireswarananda abide in Brahman.

If this book is available in an electronic format and may be, free of charge on various e-book platforms, then it will reach the world at large. Devotees of the Ramakrishna Order already know of Swami Vireswarananda; the Swami's direct disciples know of him, but the sick need unction, not as much as the healthy. There may be many hearts which will change if this book were available online since extremists should know that:

Here is one thing more. We have in India, people of various ethnic backgrounds. There are so many languages and so many social customs, all different in different parts of India ... How will you integrate them into a great nation?

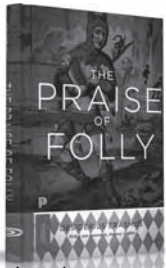
This also has been answered by Sri Ramakrishna. He found that behind every human being is the Atman. Deep behind is Atman, whatever the superficial differences. ... So, whatever difference may be there between man and man, this ideal of Atman behind everyone is the only principle which can unite us into a nation by removing all the differences.

Not only in India but all over the world, this ideal of Atman is the new revelation (163–4).

The ancient cynics were right: it is possible to revel in the oneness of humanity; but their methods were wrong. Only through renunciation of sense-objects and the rejection of identification with the mind and body can we have true cosmopolitanism. The members of the Swami Vireswarananda Smriti Committee deserve praise for publishing this elegant and well-researched book.

Subhasis Chattopadhyay

Assistant Professor of English,
Ramananda College, Bishnupur



The Praise of Folly
Desiderius Erasmus

Princeton University Press, 41 William Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540. USA. www.press.princeton.edu. 2015. 224 pp. PB. \$16.95 ISBN 9780691165646.

To understand Hamlet's exclamation: What a piece of work is a man!" (William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 2, Scene 2), for understanding 'the swerve' to modernity (see Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve: How the World Became Modern* (New York: W W Norton, 2011)) that men like Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), Girolamo Savonarola (1452–98), Pico della Mirandola (1463–94), and Desiderius Erasmus (1466–1536) forced upon Europe, we need to watch first the movie *The Name of the Rose* (1986). This should be followed by watching the movie *The Silence of the Lambs* (1991). From the darkness, literally *The Name of the Rose* is tinted forbiddingly subdued and dark throughout; of the Middle Ages we enter into the splendour of the Renaissance in the tortured world of psychopaths in *The Silence of the Lambs*. From degenerate cultic monastic learning of the Middle Ages

we now enter into a world where everything is anthropocentric; the movement from Scholasticism to the Renaissance is best caught on camera when we find Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the Lambs* listening to Renaissance music; Lecter even studies and teaches Renaissance art and reenacts the murder of Girolamo Savonarola. The irony of understanding the Renaissance through *The Silence of the Lambs* will not be lost on the Renaissance scholar. Jacob Burckhardt's *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (1860) cannot anymore compete with the micro attention spans of scholars and students living their lives as 'Twitterati' and engaged social media addicts whose faces are open books for everyone to read. Movies at least demand lesser attention spans than Burckhardt's tome or Erwin Panofsky's ruminations on Renaissance and earlier art. Akin to this prescription of getting crash courses on the Middle Ages and on the Renaissance is the irony of knowing the Renaissance overreacher through studying the book under review. For according to Erasmus, epistemology is folly, as all manner of things are follies. Everything is just dust. Hamlet would conclude that man is but only a 'quintessence of dust' (William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 2, Scene 2). Also, Ficino, Savonarola, and Pico della Mirandola, along with Erasmus erased religious fanaticism and xenophobia from Europe. Today we need these men more than ever since various ideological beasts slouch towards Bethlehem to be born, their hours come around at last (see W B Yeats, *The Second Coming*).

Erasmus's mockery of Thomism and the Vitruvian Man has become an uncategorisable classic indispensable for appreciating the Renaissance as simultaneously profoundly literary, a paradigm changing historical epoch, and also as a theological cusp where Martin Luther's angst regarding the Catholic Church was intellectually validated as at least permissible. It was Erasmus, who eventually shaped the Reformation. The discipline-transgressing nature of *The Praise of Folly* is clear when we have a professional historian writing a foreword to the book and the translation and commentary is the well-known English version of Hoyt Hopenwell Hudson's (1893–1944). Hudson was a great Renaissance literary critic in his own

right and this book was originally published by Princeton University Press in 1941. Hudson remains a clear translator and mercifully does not engage in too much transcreation. Transcreation is not the aim of a good translator, notwithstanding P Lal's views. This reviewer attended classes by Professor Lal every Saturday during his graduate studies and found Professor Lal's views on translation similar to creation and thus generally of the nature of the imaginary. Professor Lal's rendering of the Mahabharata is thus good poetry, but bad translation. Later translators of Erasmus are better transcreators of Erasmus than Hoyt Hopewell Hudson. Princeton University Press has shown great wisdom in choosing Hudson's English over say, the English of Robert M Adams. Adam's Latin is strong even in his English and generations of Erasmus students have to be content with Adam's convoluted syntax and elisions.

Hudson's version of Erasmus's Latin text has been reviewed well by John Archer Gee in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, October 1942, pp. 544–6. This reviewer cannot hope to outdo Archer Gee in his appraisal of Hoyt Hopewell Hudson. Betty Radice's translation of the Latin text is good, but this reviewer finds Hopewell Hudson more precise. Radice's translation lacks the rigour of Latin—while Robert M Adam's version is too rigorous and often borders on transcreation as has been mentioned in the last paragraph—and is thus a little pale compared to Hudson's more cynical turn use of the English language. Princeton University Press has done a service to students and Renaissance scholars by reviving Hudson's edition along with copious notes. Mercifully the notes by Hudson are right at the end of the book and do not interrupt the reading of the text by being chunks of footnotes distractingly present at the end of each page as is the way with more student-friendly versions of this text. These latter editions are reductive and often mislead the neophyte reading Erasmus for the first time.

Charlie Hebdo has been trolled for mocking death. But when Jonathan Swift advised us to eat little children during famines only fools protested. Literature is the only domain of knowledge which revels in sustained mockery—of

everything on earth and beyond—and systematically transforms all sublimity into farce. Humour, irony, and raucous laughter leer out of the literary object. That which is like a gargoyle is literature. Erasmus's *The Praise of Folly* is literature in this sense of being akin to a gargoyle. In these times when theologians often think too much of their own utterances we need Erasmus. As I type in my word processor sitting in semi-rural India; a beast is rampaging the Middle East in the name of God: 'I [Erasmus] have heard of a certain notable fool ... who was about to explain the mystery of Holy Trinity before a very distinguished audience. In order that he might at once make a display of his uncommon learning and give special satisfaction to the divines who were listening, he entered upon his matter in a completely new way—that is, from letters, syllables, and words; then from the agreement of noun and verb, of adjective and noun; while everybody was lost in wonder and some were murmuring to themselves that phrase from Horace, "What is all this stink about?"' (89).

Certainly Jonathan Swift in *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) was referring to Erasmus when he wrote of Yahoos and Houyhnhnms. A certain system of theology, an insidious perversion of Semitic ideology, is killing people throughout the world fuelled by the rhetoric of mad people based mainly in the Levant in the Middle East, not to speak anything of their crazy online kinsfolk. Erasmus shows us that 'the best response to evil is ridicule' (Elle Griffiths, 'ISIS Leader's Call to Arms Mocked by Muslims in Hilarious Excuses as to Why They Can't Join Group', *Mirror*, 27 December 2015 <<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/isis-leaders-call-arms-mocked-7077666>> accessed 25 February 2016). Those who are prudes and generally evil also need to think about their living spaces—Hitler's *lebensraum* immediately comes to mind—as many reprobates continue doing: 'They draw exact pictures of every part of hell as if they had spent many years in that commonwealth. ... I [Erasmus] often get a good laugh myself when these theologians that loom up so vast in their own eyes begin speaking in their slovenly and barbarous idiom and jabber so that no one except a jabberer can understand them' (84).

This reviewer too is astonished at the fecundity of those who cannot imagine God and God's majesty, but can write eloquently about sin and the effects of sin. Joseph in *Wuthering Heights* (1845–6) by Emily Brontë, Arthur Dimmesdale in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), and Margaret White in Stephen King's *Carrie* (1974) are some who would have done well to have studied Erasmus. These fictional characters would not have been mentioned here unless they are just types for a large number of real, living people who dream hellfire for others during the course of their boring days. Erasmus is an antidote to morbid self-aggrandisement and apocalyptic thinking.

Anthony Grafton's foreword is clear and situates Erasmus within the lineage of Lucian of Samosata. Grafton's write-up proves the historically important role which Erasmus played in affecting Greenblatt's 'swerve', but Grafton's foreword also necessitates the substitution of the normative Renaissance for the more accurate Early Modernism. When men began guffawing at their own absurd ideas about the cosmos and realised the extent of their own psychoses; their insights into their own selves made them realise the split between the one, imaginary, integrated person into a persona or mask which was public, and a lie, and their own schizoid interior world of the grotesque and freakery, which is the reality (see *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University, 1996)); then Modernism truly began. The Reformation is the beginning of the Modernist turn within the history of ideas. Erasmus was the first of the Modernists and this reprint under review, will urge new readers to savour the wit of a man who bandied words in friendliness with Saint Thomas More (1478–1535). Is it not an irony that Erasmus has to be contended with by Catholics when they scrutinise the life of one of their greatest Renaissance men of letters? Saint More and Erasmus are signs of contradiction, but together they *are* the best early Moderns. Both of them overreached their mandates.

It is passé in Erasmus scholarship that folly is a sanctifying trope and Christianity is folly too. The Russian holy fools are all exemplars of foolishness in as much as the ancient Hindu king

Jadabharata is a fool. Shakespeare's sages are all fools; for instance, the wisest in *King Lear* is the fool. Without the fool or folly, there can be no self-recognition in Shakespeare's dramas. These ideas are so common that this reviewer did not enter into the ambiguities inherent in the choice of folly as Erasmus's protagonist, if we can at all call folly the protagonist here. It seems that the word which is Brahman qua wisdom is the main presence in this text. Erasmus's concern in this book is the techné of *becoming* a saint, like his friend Thomas More. It is entirely wrong to presume that Erasmus would have ever bothered with dunces.

Subhashis Chattopadhyay

Assistant Professor of English,
Ramananda College, Bishnupur



Pilate and Jesus

Giorgio Agamben. Trans.
Adam Kotsko

Stanford University Press, 425 Broadway St., Redwood City, CA 94063-3126, USA. www.sup.org. 2015. xii + 63 pp. PB. \$15.95 ISBN 9780804794541.

The Supreme Court of India has asked Indian parliamentarians to consider whether chemical castration of those who rape minors should be allowed under Indian law. The film *Dead Man Walking* (1995) advocates life over the death penalty. It is within these contexts of jurisprudence, literature (see Jainendra Kumar, *The Resignation: Tyagpatra*, trans. Rohini Choudhury (New Delhi: Penguin, 2012) and Vijay Tendulkar, *Silence! The Court Is in Session*, trans. Priya Adarkar (Oxford: Oxford University, 1979)), and religion that Giorgio Agamben's latest book *Pilate and Jesus* becomes important for Indians. Jesus, the 'Ecce homo', the archetypal Suffering Servant mentioned separately, but with different connotations in the *Qumran Caves Scrolls* or *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, the *Gospels*, and even within Hinduism becomes important. This is because to be human is to be abject (see Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University, 1980)). The Suffering Servant both as a trope and as God incarnate has to endure pain

and abjection: 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' (Matthew 27:46). Gautama, the Buddha died of disease, Sri Ramakrishna died of cancer, and Christ was slowly crucified and mocked that he was not rescued by his own father. Jesus could be crucified because 'The best lack all conviction, while the worst / Are full of passionate intensity' (W B Yeats, *The Second Coming*).

Pontius Pilate, the *Gospels* tell us, did nothing even when his wife exhorted him to prevent the murder of Christ (Matthew 27:19). Pilate just went along with the mob demanding the blood of a scapegoat (see René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1986)). Much later, many like Pilate among the Nazis, the Khmer Rouge, and similar genocidal organisations will shift their culpability to either their bosses or to society at large. We have forgotten that Pontius Pilate, 'an ordinary judge who, as representative of Caesar, had jurisdiction over the entire human race' (39) inaugurated Christian soteriology within time. Agamben shifts the academic gaze on to Pilate, which is both laudable as well as misplaced. This has far reaching consequences; more important than say, the works of Noam Chomsky or Jacques Derrida. Chomsky refuses to encounter head-on the reality of evil in the woof of history. The Shoah had stunned philosophers into intellectual indolence. Agamben's analysis of the Jesus-Pilate dyad, if such a monstrous binary can be conceived, is in fact a Leibnitz monad which needs to be scrutinised if we are to study the rise of the inhuman aka the problem of evil. It is interesting that Agamben situates Pilate before Christ in the title of the book. As will be explained later, this is a mistake.

As literature served Sigmund Freud construct his theories of anxiety and obsessions, and Martha Nussbaum to develop her theories of the fragility of goodness, Dante explicates jurisprudence for Agamben. This long essay sees the Jesus event through Dante: 'Why must the decisive event of history—the passion of Christ and the redemption of humanity—take the form of a trial? Why must Jesus deal with the law and contend with Pilate—the vicar of Caesar—in a struggle that he ultimately does not seem to bring to a conclusion? Dante sought to answer this question, and

not evasively, in the *De monarchia*, even if what he was concerned with above all was the legitimization of the Roman Empire' (55).

Strange that Agamben chooses the *De monarchia* over Dante's understanding of moral neutrality as a sin. Stranger still is Agamben's conclusion that Dante was bothered solely with the 'legitimation of the Roman Empire' (ibid.). Dante surely knew that one renders 'unto Caesar' what is Caesar's and not mix the kingdom of God with the Roman empire (Matthew 22:21 and Mark 12:17). It is hard to believe that Agamben has greater insight in the Christ event or justice than Dante. Be that as it may, we now turn to Agamben's treatment of the continuous elision of justice that faces the *homo sacer* or the abject being in *the here and the now* who has risen out of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The thesis that justice evades the human person is nothing new. Kafka in *The Trial* (1914–5) points out the inhuman nature of the legal system. Agamben's latest book, which is celebrated online as a fitting closure to his series on the *homo sacer*, reduces the economy of salvation, the role of a personal God, and Christ Himself to human frailty and not to Divine *fiat* through the primacy Agamben gives to Pontius Pilate. The telos of all major religious soteriologies is the sovereignty of the good and not the victory of evil.

Reading this book one gets the impression that human history is no longer guided by God. Agamben's is the most nuanced academic attack so far on the Hindu karma theory, though he never mentions Hinduism. John Hick attacked karma normatively but Agamben does it without even mentioning karma. Yet Hindu soteriology will reject Pilate over Jesus since Jesus is the incarnation who answers perfectly Pilate's question: 'Quid est veritas?, What is truth?' (John 18:38). The answer is to be found in Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ* (c. 1427 CE), a book revered by Swami Vivekananda: Jesus *is* the truth. Pilate is all that masquerades as the truth. Agamben's interrogation of jurisprudence and history of incarnations vis-à-vis human history is flawed to the extent that it is an irreligious structuralist assessment of a religious event. Jesus suffered on the Cross not merely because Pilate did nothing but solely because Jesus freely and of his own accord chose

to suffer (see *The Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane*, Matthew 26:42) like Sri Ramakrishna chose to suffer of his own free will. Nonetheless Agamben should now supplant Derrida *et al* within the social sciences and humanities since it is not grammatology which demands our immediate attention, but the rise of fundamentalism. The world is teetering towards a Third World War as Pope Francis has warned; where Yazidi women, for instance are being sold in the bazaars of The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant; a non-state which is nonetheless hell on earth—Dante's *Inferno* realised. Agamben's critique of Pilate warns us of the consequences of inaction and the futility of asking 'Quid est veritas?' and then doing nothing when confronted with the truth. The answer to what the Supreme Court of India has asked, the question with which we began this review, is that we have to either choose harsher punishments for perpetrators of heinous crimes or let our minors be raped. There is no middle ground. Agamben in the best philosophical fashion, following Frank Kermode, opts for the morally convenient 'sense of an ending' rather than condemning Pilate once for all. Agamben is himself morally ambiguous and thus sees Pilate as not entirely morally culpable. The *New Testament* on the other hand is certain of Pilate's complicity with evil. Dante, whom Agamben tears apart, was convinced that a wrong is a wrong and nothing can justify violence against the non-violent; there are absolute evils as there is one absolute Good. Immanuel Kant is more existentially honest than Giorgio Agamben.

Lest our intellectual honchos find this reviewer lacking in rigorous homework, he quotes the following from a very lucid article, which naturally finds Agamben suitable for defence of a man who stands for the fragmentation of India:

The contemporary Italian philosopher, Giorgio Agamben has written in a manner that is both intellectually persuasive and ethically pressing, about a figure found in ancient Roman law called the *homo sacer*. This is a man who is the most vulnerable denizen of the political community, because his absolute vulnerability is the condition for the absolute power of the ruler. ...

Agamben delves deep into the political and philosophical treatises of ancient Rome to

understand this strange figure because he finds, within the murderous space of the Nazi concentration camp, the same utter abandonment/banishment that does not make sense in the inclusive framework of modern citizenship. ... Thus every person in Auschwitz, according to Agamben, is a *homo sacer*: neither a criminal, nor a sacrificial victim, and yet consigned to death (Ananya Vajpeyi, 'The Bare Life Of S.A.R. Geelani, Ph.D' <<http://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/the-bare-life-of-sar-geelani-phd/226458>> accessed 26 February, 2016).

This *homo sacer* that Agamben strives to make explicit is not the *homo sacer* who is Jesus, the Suffering Servant. Agamben uses sacred motifs to deconstruct major faith traditions.

Subhasis Chattopadhyay

Assistant Professor of English,
Ramananda College, Bishnupur



One Self

Nome

Society of Abidance in Truth (SAT),
1834 Ocean Street, Santa Cruz, CA
95060, USA. www.satramana.org.
2015. viii + 648 pp. PB. \$24.95 ISBN
9780981940977.

Another Q: What of a situation of extreme engagement of the senses in violence in a concentration camp? There may be torture, starvation, or extreme pain. Can one still connect with this Knowledge under such violent circumstances?

N.: The violence or injury is to the body only. The Knowledge is intrinsically bodiless. The situation has no effect. ...

N.: If we want to eliminate sensory pain, an anesthetic will do, but giving someone an anesthetic does not endow her with wisdom. Nowhere has the [Ramana] Maharshi, Sankara, or ... the Buddha, recommended anesthetics as a practice. ... The Wisdom, which is Self-Knowledge ... is not reached by the senses ... The idea that you are a sensing entity or a nexus point of all the senses is only imagined in the mind. When you do not imagine such in the mind, you are unaffected, just as space is unaffected by whatever seems to coursing through it. (312-3)

One of the strong objections against Advaita Vedanta is that it does not adequately address the lived experience of those who face annihilation due to genocides tacitly supported by extremist Semitic thinkers like Musa Cerantonio. Arne Grøn writes: 'Religion deals with phenomena that carry an infinite significance for humans that they themselves do not master. Would this give us a lead in understanding what the religious can do in responses to mass atrocities? The short answer would be that this depends on whether religion can address the limit of ethics, as an ethical limit (Arne Grøn, 'The Limit of Ethics—The Ethics of the Limit, *The Religious in Responses to Mass Atrocity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, eds Thomas Brudholm and Thomas Cushman (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2009), 38–59; 51).

This simple solution to Grøn is that there must be an external evil entity whose *esse* is as real as the *esse* of God apart from being *not*-God. This non-being is evil. We humans want to *master* theodicy. This is a logical fallacy because evil within Western religions participates in the *becoming* of the good; the *Felix culpa*. Further, since the mercy of God turns evil to good, it is not impossible that this evil is itself an illusion since an Aristotelian opposite—evil in this case—can never be less than what it opposes. Advaita Vedanta solves this problem of evil and Nome in simple language addresses and resolves the problem of evil in this book. A world view that does not tackle the problem of evil is a deficient world view. This reviewer is moved by the simplicity of Nome's style throughout the book. If one were to begin studying Advaita Vedanta; this book is an excellent supplement to the basic texts. Master Nome is a follower of Ramana Maharshi and this book is a fitting tribute to that saint of Arunachala.

One aspect of the book needs to be highlighted in this age of incessant talk and constant connectivity: Nome rightly insists on the importance of silence and its nuances throughout this book. Language with its elisions and aporias is important in philosophy since it sorts out what Jennifer L Geddes terms 'the double bind' (*The Religious in Responses to Mass Atrocity*, 21) which

one encounters within the language of Western theodicy. Nome's book is a response to this *double bind*, both in content and form and erases the venom in the thoughts of the likes of Cerantonio mentioned above. This is a timely rejoinder to the rise of the ISIS in the Middle Eastern Levant.

Subhasis Chattopadhyay

Assistant Professor of English,
Ramananda College, Bishnupur

BOOKS RECEIVED



Face It With Love

J P Vaswani

Gita Publishing House,
Sadhu Vaswani Mission, 10,
Sadhu Vaswani Path, Pune
411 001. Email: gph@sadhuvaswani.org. 2015. 152 pp.
₹ 100. PB. ISBN 9789380743899.



The Simple Way

J P Vaswani

Gita Publishing House, Sadhu
Vaswani Mission, 10, Sadhu Vas-
wani Path, Pune 411 001. Email:
gph@sadhuvaswani.org. 2015. 120
pp. \$ 8. PB. ISBN 9789380743905.



Ego Goes: Divinity Grows

J P Vaswani

Gita Publishing House, Sadhu
Vaswani Mission, 10, Sadhu Vas-
wani Path, Pune 411 001. Email:
gph@sadhuvaswani.org. 2015. 136
pp. \$8. PB. ISBN 9789380743912.



Happily Ever After

J P Vaswani

Gita Publishing House, Sadhu
Vaswani Mission, 10, Sadhu Vas-
wani Path, Pune 411 001. Email:
gph@sadhuvaswani.org. 2015. 92
pp. \$8. HB. ISBN 9789380743844.

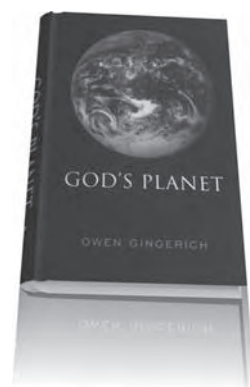
MANANA

**Exploring thought-currents from around the world.
Extracts from a thought-provoking book every month.**

God's Planet

Owen Gingerich

Harvard University Press, 79 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA. 2014. 192 pp. \$ 16.79. HB. ISBN 9780674417106.



ARISTOTLE HAD A WORD FOR IT: *metaphysics*. It stood for his inquiry into the big questions, literally 'beyond physics'.

At a Renaissance university, the professor of mathematics lectured from Aristotle's *De Coelo* (*On the Heavens*) about the celestial motions of the stars and planets in their unending circles, and about the linear terrestrial motions based on Aristotle's *Physics*.

Aristotle's book *Metaphysics* was reserved for the more senior professor of philosophy. In that book the ancient Greek sage inquired into eternity and final causes. What moves without being moved? Aristotle asks. It must be the eternal heavens, with unceasing movement, he responds. But why? It must be the desire for the good, and the final cause is therefore love. In the climax to this passage, Aristotle writes, 'If then, God is always in that good state in which we sometimes are, this is wonderful, and if in a better state this is even more wonderful. And God *is* in a better state. And life also belongs to God; for actuality of reason is life, and God is that actuality; and God's self-dependent actuality is life most good and eternal, most good, so that life and continuous and eternal duration belong to God, for this is God.' This, then, is the unmoved mover.

When Galileo was negotiating the terms for a position at the court of Cosimo dei Medici in Florence, he was comparatively indifferent about

the amount of his salary, but he was firm about his title: 'Mathematician and Philosopher to the Grand Duke.' Galileo wished to discourse not only about the apparent motions of the stars and planets, but he also wanted to be credentialed to speak with authority on how the heavens were really made, the deep and even controversial issues of cosmology.

The metaphysical issues are with us even today. Included are big questions that touch on observational or experimental questions of science, but which generally lie beyond the normal bounds of science. And included are questions that fall in the domain of theology, and also rather differently, in the domain of religion. The relationship between the arena of science and the religious domain has been tense going back to the time of Galileo and beyond, but it has been particularly fraught in twentieth-century America, with issues relating to the age of the cosmos and the rise of life on earth.

And here my late Harvard colleague Stephen Jay Gould enters the fray. In 1973 Steve and Niles Eldredge, of the American Museum of Natural History in New York, published evidence that some invertebrate species evolved comparatively rapidly, followed by long periods of stasis during which the species remained constant, a pattern they referred to as punctuated equilibrium. Their critique of the standard evolutionary theory, according to which species

changed slowly but continuously from small mutations, riled up the classical evolutionists, and soon Creationists seized on the controversy to declare that evolution was falling apart at the seams. Steve was appalled and began to take a greater activist role in defending evolution. In 1981 he was one of six science experts who participated in the Little Rock Creationism trial. In 1999, when he had been elected president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, he published a defense of evolution in a volume provocatively entitled *Rocks of Ages*.

In his book Steve recounted the ongoing discord between science and religion in American society. He declared that true science and religion are not in conflict, and that each domain, or 'magisterium', had valuable contributions to make provided each kept to its own territory. What he advocated was NOMA, or 'non-overlapping magisteria'.

NOMA sounds like a great idea, but can it, and did it ever, actually work? Can physics truly be separated from metaphysics? In Book VI of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle says it must include theology because 'if the divine is present anywhere, it is present in things of this sort'.

The three Herrmann Lectures that comprise this volume, given at Gordon College in Wenham, Massachusetts, in October of 2013, examine from a historical perspective how the magisteria have repeatedly overlapped over the past centuries and how today it seems unlikely that the overlaps will cease. Yet an appreciation that there are differing magisteria, with differing paths to understanding, may ameliorate the long-standing conflict.

Was Copernicus Right?

For many years I have puzzled about the nature of science and its theoretical structures

of explanation. What gives science the ability to make predictions? In 1705 Edmond Halley predicted that a bright comet he had observed in 1682 would return again in 1758, and if it happened, he said, he hoped that candid posterity would notice that it had first been predicted by an Englishman. He was lampooned for placing the date of the comet's return well after his lifetime, so he would not have to face public scorn for such a ridiculous prognostication. But the comet did return and has borne his name ever since.

And there have been many later astronomers who envisioned planets around many distant stars, though they had little hope of actually verifying this. Today, with the recent Kepler mission, direct evidence for this prediction has been attained for nearly a thousand extrasolar planets, or exoplanets, as they are called. In another field, biologists have concluded that the ancestors of whales lived on the land, and today palaeontologists have found hundreds of skeletons of early whales that still have vestiges of legs. Or in physics, we have all heard of the massive search for the so-called Higgs boson, which was predicted to exist and was finally found this past year.

This uncanny ability to make such a coherent picture of the physical and biological world has now allowed science to reign at the top of the tree of knowledge. This has not always been the case. Five centuries ago in Western civilization theology was considered the queen of the sciences, that is, the queen of knowledge. So what is the epistemological relationship between science and theology today? Are they separate magisteria, each going its own way, entirely unrelated? This is a major puzzle, and one I do not expect to resolve. Nevertheless, it is a central puzzle that I hope to address in these chapters, gradually circling around the issues from a historical perspective.



REPORTS



Foundation Stone Laying at Ramakrishna Mission, Imphal

News of Branch Centres

Swami Gautamananda, Adhyaksha, Ramakrishna Math, Chennai, inaugurated the monks' quarters and a multipurpose hall at **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Aurangabad** on 24 January 2016.

Under-17 and under-19 Ball Badminton teams of Tamil Nadu, having respectively one and three students of the higher secondary schools run by **Ramakrishna Mission, Chengalpattu**, stood first in the 61st National School Games. The championship was organised by School Games Federation of India in January.

Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Vidyalaya, Chennai celebrated its platinum jubilee on 8 and 9 January. Among the other events held on this occasion, a life-size statue of Holy Mother was installed on the centre's main campus at Usman Road, Chennai. Swami Gautamananda and Swami Suhitananda, General Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, among others attended the different programmes held on the occasion.

A class-12 student of **Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Chennai** won a gold medal in the road cycling event at the state-level sports and games competitions organised by the School Education Department, Government of Tamil Nadu, at Neyveli in Cuddalore district on 7 January.

On 20 January the monks' quarters building at **Ramakrishna Mission, Imphal** was inaugurated by Swami Suhitananda and the foundation stone for the proposed Institute of Human Excellence was laid by Sri O Ibobi Singh, chief minister of Manipur.

Ramakrishna Mission, Jammu conducted two values education programmes at Rajouri and Reasi districts on 16 and 17 January. Altogether

about 1,800 people attended the programmes.

Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, Kamarpukur held a farmers' fair from 20 to 22 January in which about 100 farmers took part.


As a part of its year-long centenary celebration, **Ramakrishna Mission Calcutta Students' Home, Belgharia, Kolkata** conducted a two-day residential youth convention on 24 and 25 January. Over 300 delegates from different districts of West Bengal participated in the convention.

Relief

Flood Relief · Tamil Nadu: Torrential rains in many parts of Tamil Nadu in November and December 2015 caused severe inundation in several areas of the state, affecting lakhs of families. Nine of our centres conducted the following relief services.

(a) **Chennai Math** served cooked food to 22,100 affected people and tea to 1,250 people. Besides, the centre distributed 37,185 kg rice, 2,200 kg rava (semolina), 765 loaves of bread, 5,647 kg dal, 6,000 kg vegetables, 4,022 litres of edible oil, 675 kg sambar powder, 397 kg turmeric powder, 440 kg chilli powder, 2,436 kg salt, 196 kg pickles, 13,725 packets of biscuits, 300 litres of milk, 4,872 kg sugar, 27 kg tea powder, 710 packets of mosquito-repellent coils, 7,862 mats, 8,612 bed-sheets, 7,653 saris, 3,992 nightgowns, 7,683 lungis, 30 shirts, 7,232 towels, 200 assorted garments, 800 buckets, 200 mugs, 1,006 plates, and 1,006 tumblers among 31,703 people in various parts of Chennai city from 24 November to 25 December. Further, in Cuddalore district, the centre distributed 42,285 kg rice, 1,300 kg rava, 25 kg flour, 525 loaves of bread, 6,000 kg dal, 4,100 kg edible oil, 120 kg sambar powder, 310 kg turmeric powder, 330 kg chilli powder, 100 kg cumin seeds, 100 kg mustard seeds, 100 kg tamarind, 3,100 kg salt, 7,500 packets of pickles, 500 packets of rusk, 2,575 packets of biscuits, 505 kg Horlicks, 3,600 kg sugar, 2,100 packets of mosquito-repellent coils,

25,200 matchboxes, 4,313 bed-sheets, 2,288 mats, 3,143 saris, 224 dhotis, 2,017 lungis, 2,240 towels, 4,500 assorted garments, 150 cooking vessels, 25 pots, 369 plates, 512 buckets, and 512 mugs among 5,686 people from 9 to 20 December. (b) **Chennai Students' Home** distributed 1,125 kg rava, 1,125 kg semiya (vermicelli), 1,500 kg dal, 375 kg soybeans, 750 kg edible oil, 375 kg tamarind, 75 kg mustard seeds, 75 kg turmeric powder, 37 kg cumin seeds, 75 kg chilli powder, 750 kg salt, 75 kg pickles, and 750 kg sugar among 751 families in West Tambaram area of Kanchipuram district, and 505 kg assorted vegetables among 185 families in Mylapore area of Chennai from 27 to 29 November. The centre also distributed 9,561 packets of cooked food (each packet containing rice, pickles, and a water sachet) and 20,359 loaves of bread among 29,920 people in 16 areas of Thiruvallur, Kanchipuram, and Chennai districts from 1 to 5 December. (c) **Chennai Mission Ashrama** distributed 7,630 packets of cooked food, 4,457 kg rice, 2,627 loaves of bread, 692 kg dal, 35,349 packets of biscuits, 1,880 kg of milk powder, 20,477 litres of drinking water, 1,090 utensil-sets (each set containing pots, plates, kadahi, tumblers, etc), 2,100 buckets, 2,100 mugs, 2,100 plates, 2,100 bed-sheets, 1,814 blankets, 4,047 mats, 2,100 saris, 1,155 dhotis, 2,100 lungis, and 3,054 mosquito-repellent coils among 5,038 families in and around T Nagar area of Chennai from 3 to 29 December. (d) **Chengalpattu** centre served 13,850 plates of cooked food and distributed 1,290 kg rice, 258 kg dal, 187 saris, 187 dhotis, 187 bed-sheets, and 374 mats among 316 families of 35 villages in Kanchipuram district from 29 November to 23 December. The centre also served milk to 1,000 poor children and provided medical relief to 82 patients on 3 December. (e) **Coimbatore Math** distributed 229 lungis, 229 saris, 229 towels, 229 utensil-sets (each set containing 2 cooking pots, 3 plates, 2 spoons, a pan, and 2 tumblers), 279 children's garments, and 279 toiletry kits (each kit containing a toothpaste tube, a toothbrush, a soap bar, a vial of coconut oil, and 2 bars of washing soap) among 229 families of 7 villages in Thiruvallur district on 8 December. The centre also distributed 145 lungis, 145 saris, 145 towels, 290 plates, 290 tumblers, and 145 toiletry kits (each kit containing a toothpaste tube,

a toothbrush, a vial of coconut oil, a bathing soap bar, and 2 bars of washing soap) among 145 families in Bhuvanagiri taluk of Cuddalore district on 22 December. (f) **Kanchipuram** centre distributed 16,265 kg rice, 2,470 kg dal, 500 packets of biscuits, 2,784 kg milk powder, 425 kg sugar, 4,508 litres of drinking water, 2,500 mats, 3,699 blankets, 250 dhotis, and 1,166 saris among 2,330 families of 14 villages in Kanchipuram district from 18 November to 10 December. (g) **Madurai** centre arranged the distribution of the following items through Chennai Math: 2,222 kg rice, 159 kg flour, 70 kg rava, 29 loaves of bread, 15 kg dal, 10 kg assorted spices, 12 kg salt, 50 coconuts, 1,500 packets of pickles, 1,557 packets of biscuits, 5 kg sugar, 11 kg coffee powder, 100 kg sweets, 354 litres of drinking water, 558 saris, 552 churidars, 210 shirts, 90 T-shirts, 141 pants, 20 lungis, 175 dhotis, 120 nightgowns, 1,773 children's garments, 109 towels, 347 bed-sheets, 175 blankets, 268 tubes of toothpaste, 37 toothbrushes, 2 kg detergent powder, 75 bars of soap, 16 buckets, 168 plates, 200 sets of utensils (each set containing a cooking vessel, plates, a tumbler, and a spoon), 50 candles, and 100 notebooks. (h) **Malliankaranai** centre distributed 6,300 kg rice, 20 kg wheat flour, 750 kg dal, 720 kg edible oil, 20 kg assorted spices, 720 kg salt, 720 kg sugar, 595 utensil-sets (each set containing 1 kadahi, 2 tumblers, 2 spoons, and 1 plate), 600 saris, 600 dhotis, 600 towels, 600 bed-sheets, 20 blankets, and 600 mats among 1,253 families of 7 villages in Kanchipuram district from 15 to 28 December. (i) **Nattarampalli** centre served 3,900 plates of cooked food to 300 families and distributed 10,800 kg rice, 1,080 kg dal, 1,080 kg edible oil, 540 kg tamarind, 1,242 kg assorted spices, 1,080 kg salt, 1,500 litres of drinking water, 713 mosquito-repellents, 100 bottles of Dettol, 296 kg bleaching powder, 300 tubes of toothpaste, 200 towels, 1,000 saris, 986 pants, and 948 shirts among 2,441 families of 17 villages in Kanchipuram and Cuddalore districts from 4 to 21 December. Medical relief was provided to 752 flood-affected patients at Indira Nagar area in Kanchipuram district on 8 December. 

Correction · February 2016, p. 299: Swami Ranganathananda's photograph was taken at Mahabaleshwar in 1938 and not in Karachi.

WORKS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Abhedananda in India (in 1906)	100.00	Ramakrishna Kathamrita and Ramakrishna	70.00
An Introduction to the Philosophy of Panchadasi	10.00	Reincarnation	60.00
A Study of Heliocentric Science	100.00	Religion of the 20th Century	15.00
Attitude of Vedanta Towards Religion	50.00	Religion, Revelation and God	80.00
Bhagavad Gita, the Divine Message (in 2 parts)	300.00	Religion of the 20th Century	15.00
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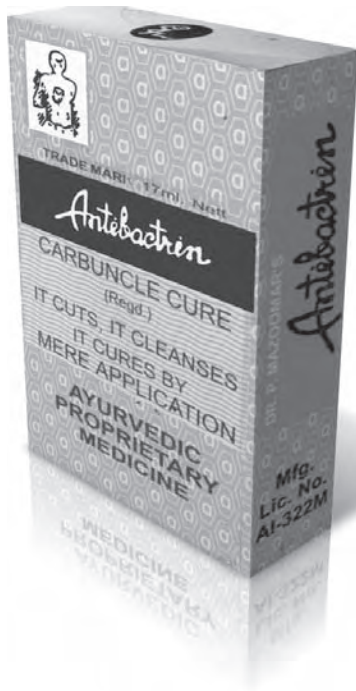


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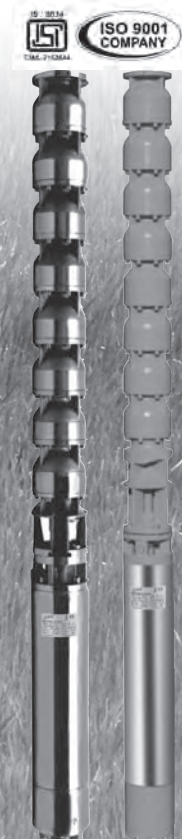
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South Nada, Opp. Ashoka Petrol Pump,
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An Appeal

Dear Devotees, well-wishers and friends,

Ramakrishna Math at Haripad in Kerala was started in 1912 and has been sanctified by the stay of Swami Brahmanandaji Maharaj, the Spiritual Son of Sri Ramakrishna. But by long lapse of time, the buildings have become totally unfit for use.

To start with, we propose to have the Monk's quarters, rooms for Welfare and social activities, office building, Library and free reading room, guests room and a Universal Temple of Sri Ramakrishna. The entire infrastructure has to be re-constructed. By the grace of Bhagawan Sri Ramakrishna, the plans for rebuilding the whole centre has been prepared.

The estimated expenditure for this project is Rupees 5 Crores.

We invite every one of you the noble-hearted people, specially the devotees of Sri Ramakrishna, to come forward with their generous donations to enable us to erect this abode for Sri Ramakrishna and serve humanity.

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Yours in the Lord,
Swami Virabhadrananda, *Adhyaksha*



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We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonising the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran.

Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of THE RELIGION, which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best.

— Swami Vivekananda



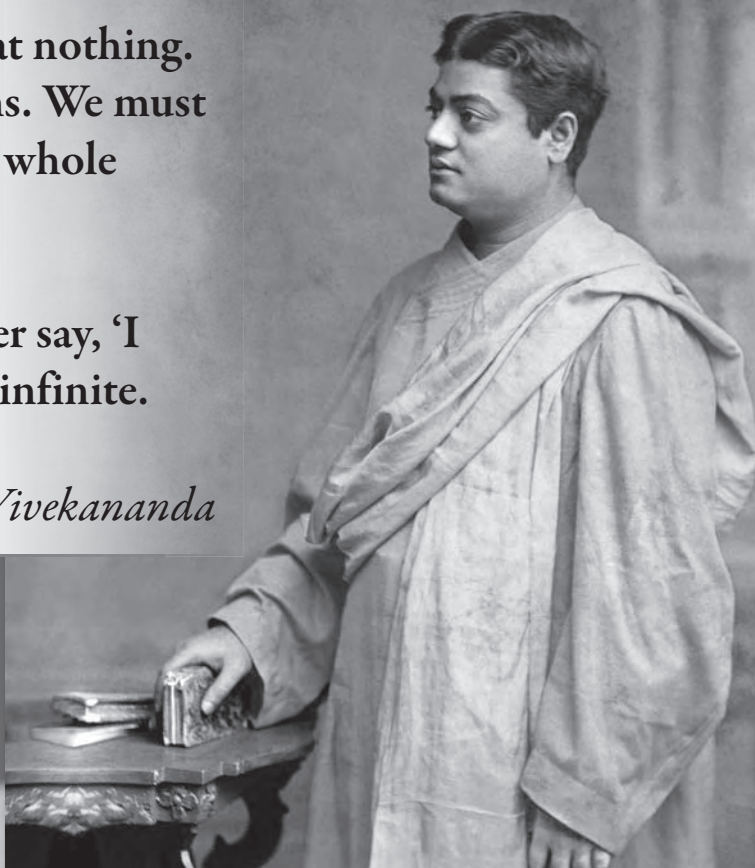
Each soul is potentially divine.
The goal is to manifest this
Divinity within.

Strength is life, weakness is
death.

Fear nothing, stop at nothing.
You will be like lions. We must
rouse India and the whole
world.

Never say, 'No', never say, 'I
cannot', for you are infinite.

—*Swami Vivekananda*



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